UNITED
NATIONS

DP

**Executive Board
of the
United Nations
Development Programme
and of the
United Nations
Population Fund**

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/1997/21
7 July 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Third regular session 1997
15-19 September 1997, New York
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
UNDP

REPORT ON THE ANNUAL SESSION

NEW YORK, 12-23 MAY 1997

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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Introduction

1. The President, Mr. Hans Lundborg (Sweden), opened the session. He informed the Executive Board that the Bureau had met three times since the second regular session and they discussed the outcome of the second regular session 1997, Executive Board field visits in 1997 and the agenda for the annual session.

2. The Administrator welcomed members and observers to the annual session and gave an overview of the main items to be taken up by the Executive Board. He also noted that for the first time the Board session would include a special event, to be held on 20 May, with the theme of poverty eradication.

3. The Executive Board approved the provisional agenda as contained in document DP/1997/L.3 and Corr.1:

Item 1.	Organizational matters
	UNFPA segment
Item 2.	UNFPA: Report of the Executive Director for 1996: programme priorities and regional overview
Item 3.	UNFPA: Evaluation activities
Item 4.	UNFPA: Work plan for 1998-2001
Item 5.	UNFPA: Programming process
Item 6.	UNFPA: Information and communications strategy
	UNDP/UNFPA segment
Item 7.	Reports to the Economic and Social Council
Items 2 and 8	Internal oversight and accountability
	UNDP segment
Item 8.	UNDP: Annual report of the Administrator and related matters
Item 9.	UNDP: Country cooperation frameworks and related matters
Item 10.	UNDP: Communication and information programme
Item 11.	UNDP: United Nations Development Fund for Women

Item 12. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

Item 13. United Nations Office for Project Services

Item 14. Other matters

4. The Secretary of the Executive Board noted that the conference room paper on funding had not yet been issued and would be discussed at informal consultations during June 1997.

5. The Executive Board agreed to the revised work plan as distributed by the secretariat. Two informal meetings would be held: on 21 May, a briefing by UNDP for non-governmental organizations and Executive Board members; and on 22 May, an informal briefing on the International Year of Volunteers.

6. The Executive Board approved the report on the first regular session 1997 (DP/1997/6) and that on the second regular session 1997 (DP/1997/12) without comment.

7. The Executive Board approved the text of the report of the annual session on item 7: Reports to the Economic and Social Council, as orally amended.

8. During the session, the President informed the Executive Board that the Administrator, Mr. James Gustave Speth, had been reaffirmed by the General Assembly for a second four-year term as Administrator. Many delegations congratulated the Administrator on his reappointment.

9. The Executive Board agreed to the following schedule of future sessions in 1997 and 1998 subject to the approval of the Committee on Conferences:

Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997
First regular session 1998	19-23 January 1998
Second regular session 1998	20-24 April 1998
Annual session 1998	8-19 June 1998 (Geneva)
Third regular session 1998	14-18 September 1998

10. The Executive Board agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third regular session 1997 of the Board, as listed in the annex to decision 97/20.

11. The Administrator, the Deputy Executive Director and the President made closing remarks.

Rules of procedure for the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA

12. The President introduced the draft rules of procedure for the Executive Board of UNDP and UNFPA (DP/1997/13). He informed the Board that the draft rules of procedure had been drafted by an ad hoc open-ended working group, chaired by Ms. Cecilia Rebong (Philippines), that had held seven meetings in 1996 and three meetings in 1997.

13. The draft rules of procedure were adopted without comments.

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14. One delegation expressed gratitude that the rules of procedure had finally been adopted. With regard to rule 16, the delegation was of the view that undue weight had been given to the interpretation of General Assembly resolution 50/227.

15. Another delegation thanked the Chairperson of the working group for her leadership and the delegation of Morocco for initially introducing the item for consideration by the Board.

UNFPA SEGMENT

II. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1996: PROGRAMME PRIORITIES AND REGIONAL OVERVIEW

A. Report of the Executive Director for 1996

16. In her introductory statement to the Board, the Executive Director highlighted certain activities that UNFPA had undertaken during 1996. She reported that the Fund had made substantial progress in operationalizing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) guided by such Executive Board decisions as 95/15 on core programme areas and 96/15 on the allocation of resources. The overall concerns of the Fund continued to be efforts to improve the effectiveness of the programmes in responding to country needs and to enhance internal oversight and accountability. In that regard, the Executive Director reported that she had undertaken actions to strengthen country offices and had established the Office of Oversight and Evaluation, reporting directly to her. She reported that, with the assistance of the United Kingdom, many UNFPA staff had been trained in logical framework techniques to help in the design and monitoring of the Fund's programmes. She detailed certain activities that had taken place in the three core programme areas of reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health; advocacy; and population and development strategies. She also touched on recent activities in the area of reproductive health in emergency situations, and she emphasized efforts the Fund was making in sub-Saharan Africa as part of the Special Initiative on Africa.

17. The Executive Director stated that although the Fund's resources had exceeded $300 million for the second year in a row the total was slightly lower than in 1995. That meant that programmable resources had declined slightly from 1995 to 1996 and the percentage of total expenditures required for the administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget had increased slightly. There had been a notable increase in government execution of programme activities from 1995 to 1996. She informed the Board that the Fund had suffered a significant cashflow problem in 1996 in that over 20 per cent of the Fund's total pledges were still outstanding at year end. She also discussed the resource situation in relation to the commitments that had been made at the ICPD for population and reproductive health programmes: developing countries had largely met their goals but international assistance from donor countries had faltered. That situation had serious consequences that were discussed in a conference room paper that UNFPA had prepared for the Board. She emphasized

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that the figures were not immutable; it was still possible to take the actions needed to improve the situation. She mentioned that one possibility being explored by UNFPA was to encourage agreements between lenders and debtor countries that would allow for a portion of national debt to be excused if local currency was used for population and reproductive health programmes.

18. The Executive Director informed the Board about some of the initiatives that the Fund was undertaking with other United Nations partners, including the inter-agency Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, which she chaired. She stated that the Fund was fully supportive of the Track 1 reform measures being carried out by the Secretary-General. She updated the Board on the status of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health, saying that draft terms of reference were being prepared by the secretariats of the three organizations concerned and would be presented to the Board. The Executive Director also proposed to the Board that it would be appropriate and useful to carry out a programme review of the implementation of the ICPD on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the conference -- an "ICPD + 5" -- in 1999.

19. In commenting on the report of the Executive Director for 1996, several delegations congratulated UNFPA on producing a comprehensive and informative report and commended the Fund on its efforts in implementing the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action. Many welcomed the focus on the core programming areas and the importance given to adolescents, women and gender. Several delegations did, however, feel that the report should be more analytical and succinct, focusing on the effectiveness of programmes and activities and their achievements, including the benefits derived by the stakeholders.

20. Delegations welcomed the steps that UNFPA was taking in such areas as management reform, introduction of the logical framework process, increased decentralization and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The work of UNFPA in the inter-agency task forces, especially that of the Basic Social Services Task for All, was particularly noted, as well as the Fund's involvement in the UNAIDS programme. It was felt that the work of UNFPA would be further enhanced by its inclusion in the Coordinating Committee on Health.

21. In her reply, the Executive Director acknowledged the comments on the report and indicated that every effort would be made to produce a more analytical report the following year, focusing on what had been achieved, what needed to be done and the constraints that remained. She felt that the training in the logical framework approach to programming, in which stakeholder analysis was taken into account, would be beneficial in helping develop measurements of programme impact. UNFPA was working hard to develop such indicators in all the sectors in which it worked.

22. Although the establishment of the Office of Oversight and Evaluation was welcomed, one delegation questioned the rationale behind having one office with responsibility for two discrete activities. The Executive Director acknowledged the distinction and said that it was one that the Fund kept clearly in mind. She also informed the Board that although the majority of evaluations of Fund activities would continue to be undertaken by the managers of those activities, a greater use of independent evaluations would be undertaken as part of oversight activities.

23. In their discussions on reproductive health, several delegations noted that the shift from family planning to the broader concept of reproductive health was an incremental process and congratulated UNFPA on its practical approach in addressing that shift. However, many delegations felt that UNFPA should bear in mind the importance that family planning had with regard to reduction in maternal mortality and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, and in addressing Safe Motherhood initiatives, post-partum and abortion care and quality-of-care issues. Efforts to reduce the incidence of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, should not be dealt with in isolation. One delegation noted that rapid population growth was still one of the major challenges in many countries and requested that UNFPA activities should be conducive to slowing population growth and that programmes should take into account the sociocultural aspects of the countries involved. One delegation sought clarification on the meaning of the phrase "family planning within the context of the reproductive health approach" and how this would relate in terms of projects and expectations. Others noted that in addressing reproductive health issues, other aspects should be taken into account, among them, the status of women, concentration on women living in rural areas, household composition, and involvement of local government institutions.

24. The Executive Director explained that most countries had accepted the reproductive health concept and were working towards operationalizing it in their programmes. She noted that in developing programmes UNFPA followed the population policies of the countries themselves and always remained conscious of the need for programmes to be culturally sensitive. She reiterated that one of the goals enunciated by the ICPD was that of population stabilization and, in so doing, the emphasis was on individual choices, decision-making and needs. She noted that Safe Motherhood was a part of the reproductive health process and that UNFPA was participating with WHO, UNICEF and The Population Council on the Safe Motherhood initiative. She stated that unsafe abortion was also a reproductive health question and should be addressed as a public health issue. The Executive Director explained that UNFPA was working closely with UNAIDS in most countries and that in some countries UNFPA served as the chair of the HIV/AIDS theme groups. She highlighted plans to develop activities designed to combat STDs, including HIV/AIDS, in all reproductive health programmes and noted that guidelines would soon be issued in that regard.

25. Many delegations commended UNFPA for its activities in the area of adolescent reproductive health but urged the Fund to collaborate with other partners in carrying out those activities. One delegation requested that activities in that area should take into consideration the role of the family. The Executive Director noted the joint initiative undertaken by UNFPA and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) on adolescent reproductive health and the production of a report that including essays written by young people. Those essays showcased the need of young people for access to services, their concern over the lack of information they received from parents, and their desire that their voices be heard. The paper, which would not be a UNFPA position paper but rather the expression of the young people themselves, would be launched in July. She also noted the joint programmes that the Fund was carrying out with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in the area of adolescent reproductive health..

26. Some delegations expressed appreciation for the focus that UNFPA had given to the question of reproductive rights and expressed their appreciation for the Fund's collaboration with the Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). There was a request for additional information on how UNFPA was addressing those issues internally. The Executive Director welcomed the remarks on the Fund's work with CEDAW and gave her assurance that UNFPA was committed to gender equity and equality, women's empowerment and reproductive rights. She indicated that that was an area of priority attention for the Fund and that gender concerns were integrated into all UNFPA programmes. She informed the Board of the work of the Fund on an agreement to determine how reproductive rights would be addressed by the Human Rights Treaty Body organizations. She recognized that more needed to be done on the institutional side and assured the Board that that would be taken into account in future programmes.

27. The issue of female genital mutilation (FGM) was raised, and its linkage as a reproductive rights issue was welcomed by many delegations. Some delegations highlighted the positive experience in Uganda in reducing the incidence of FGM. Others requested information on the constraints in other countries, the extent to which studies had been undertaken, and the response that UNFPA had had in launching activities against this practice. The Executive Director noted that public discussions were being held on FGM issues and that several countries in Africa were looking at the Uganda experience and developing similar activities. She informed the delegates of the activities of the British Broadcasting Corporation in London in producing a programme to highlight the adverse effects of FGM and of the joint programme of UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF on FGM that was launched earlier in the year.

28. Several delegations welcomed the conference room paper on the role of UNFPA with populations affected by disasters (DP/FPA/1997/CRP.2) and the positive steps taken by UNFPA with regard to providing reproductive health services in emergency situations and its collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in that regard. One delegation noted that the subject was an important concern in Africa and commended UNFPA for its activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of the delegations, however, questioned the need for the conference room paper. The Executive Director explained that, because of the large increase in the number of requests and in the activities that were being carried out, she had thought it advisable to bring the Board up to date. She noted the collaboration of UNFPA participation with UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross in providing emergency assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

29. One delegation highlighted the reproductive health and population problems being experienced in the countries with economies in transition, among them the need to expand opportunities for women and to increase their role in society and of the problems generated by the worsening economic situation. The delegation also noted that in those countries, unlike many other parts of the world, a major concern was that of low birth rates not high growth rates and requested that that be taken into account in UNFPA programme activities. The Executive Director assured the delegation that UNFPA programmes in those countries were aimed at reducing abortion, which was currently being used as a method of family

planning, as well as in reducing maternal and child mortality. Promoting the health of women was another priority area for UNFPA in those countries, as it was in all countries.

30. Several delegations called on UNFPA to work more closely with other partners in the United Nations system in carrying out its programmes, as well as with the non-governmental and private and commercial sectors. The Executive Director reiterated a number of activities that UNFPA was undertaking jointly with other agencies. She noted the need for an integrated approach in overall programming to avoid duplication and the important role that the Resident Coordinator should play in that regard. She informed the Board that UNFPA was in the process of revising guidelines to help the Resident Coordinator assistance in that role. Part of the process would be developing common data systems and a common country assessment strategy. The Executive Director also noted UNFPA's increased collaboration with NGOs and its concerted efforts in seeking partnerships with the private and commercial sectors. She mentioned a recent meeting with the Rotary International in New York, which could result in some joint collaborative efforts.

31. One delegation requested information as to how UNFPA was preparing its staff to deal with the new approaches to reproductive health services, advocacy and FGM. The Executive Director explained that the Fund had launched extensive training and retraining programmes in these areas for staff at headquarters and in the field, and a performance assessment was being undertaken to determine how staff were addressing those issues.

32. One delegation noted that the programme areas of population and development strategies and advocacy deserved priority attention and requested that emphasis be placed on the need to further strengthen national capacity in those areas. The Executive Director noted that efforts were under way on the study on absorptive capacity that had been requested by the Board the previous year and that any constraints in national execution would be included in the report that the Fund was preparing to present to the Board at the annual session in 1998.

33. Several delegations requested information on the efforts being made by the Fund to promote long-term availability of contraceptive commodities at the country level. Concern was expressed that the section of the Executive Director's annual report dealing with the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme (GCCP) had not included information on quality control of contraceptives. The Executive Director explained that the Fund had supported some feasibility studies in the past on local contraceptive production facilities and had found that they were generally not cost-effective. Quality control was an integral part of the GCCP although she acknowledged that efforts needed to be strengthened at the country level. UNFPA was planning to set up some testing facilities, whose services could be shared among countries.

34. With regard to the issue of resources, several delegations expressed concern that the financial goals agreed upon at the ICPD were not being met. Addressing that failure should be the concern not only of UNFPA or of individual countries but should be the joint effort of the entire international community. Delegations called on UNFPA to further its efforts in resource mobilization and

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asked donor countries to make every attempt to meet their ICPD commitments. UNFPA was encouraged to agree on a payment schedule with those countries that had made pledges but had not yet paid. The idea of a "debt swap" was endorsed by some countries while others pointed out that it did not address the principal issue raised by the Executive Director -- the failure of the donor countries to live up to their commitments. The Executive Director acknowledged the importance of the issues and said that she hoped the comments made by delegations would lead into an informative discussion later in the session on the conference room paper on resource mobilization that the Fund had prepared.

35. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Executive Director for 1996 on programme priorities, statistical overview and regional overview (DP/FPA/1997/10, Parts I, I/Add. 1 and Part II.

B. ICPD + 5

36. The initiative to review the progress of the ICPD in 1999, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Cairo Conference, received strong support from the delegations. Several of them requested additional information on the purpose of the exercise and its financial implications. Delegations also requested information on the role that the Commission on Population and Development would play in the proposed follow-up to the ICPD. Several delegations expressed their hope that the proposed activities would not create additional work for UNFPA and that other partners, including those outside the United Nations system, would be involved in the activities. One delegation emphasized that the follow-up process must include an evaluation of the qualitative impact that programmes were having, highlighting successes but also learning from other experiences as well.

37. The Executive Director said that she looked forward to further discussion on the question of "ICPD + 5" in its broader context and expressed appreciation for the support that had been expressed. She assured delegations that the Fund's own activities in reviewing operational experience would be carried out within the context of the current work programme of UNFPA. She felt that the proposed follow-up should involve all those concerned with implementing the ICPD, not just Governments and members of the United Nations system. The focus of the exercise would be on what had been achieved since the Cairo conference and what needed to be done in order to fulfill the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action, focusing on the constraints that remain to achieving those goals. The proposed follow-up would also give the international community an opportunity to learn from the successes that many countries had had in implementing the goals of the ICPD.

38. There was some discussion among delegations about the proper modalities for making a decision on the proposed "ICPD + 5". At the suggestion of the President of the Board, the meeting then adjourned into an informal session to discuss the procedural questions further, including a statement from the Director of the Population Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA). On resumption of the formal session, the President proposed that a small working group of interested delegations meet to draft a decision for the Board's consideration.

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39. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

97/14. ICPD + 5: Five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The Executive Board

1. Notes with appreciation the proposal of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

2. Requests the Executive Director to undertake preparatory activities for the review and appraisal within the mandate of the United Nations Population Fund;

3. Invites the President of the Executive Board to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, through the forthcoming session of the Economic and Social Council, the proposal for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference of Population and Development, for the consideration of the General Assembly and subsequent decision on the process and modalities.

16 May 1997

C. Resource mobilization

40. The ICPD Programme of Action had presented an agreed-upon scenario for mobilizing the resources (both domestic and donor funds) needed over a 20-year time span to implement the basic population and reproductive health package established by the conference. The price tag for that programme was $17 billion in 2000, increasing to $21.7 billion in 2015. UNFPA had prepared a conference room paper entitled *Meeting the Goals of the ICPD: Consequences of Resource Shortfalls up to the Year 2000* (DP/FPA/1997/CRP.1) to inform the Executive Board on the progress that had been made since the ICPD in realizing those financial goals. The paper highlighted in quantitative terms some consequences by the year 2000 if the ICPD programme were to be under-funded. Depending on the resource assumptions that were used, by the year 2000, anywhere from 96 million to 175 million fewer couples would use modern family planning services than would be the case if the ICPD resource goals were met; 43-78 million couples would not be using any contraceptive method at all; 43-88 million abortions would be added to the projected 225 million already expected between 1995 and 2000; a total of 57-104 million extra unintended births would occur between 1995 and 2000; an additional 65,000 to 117,000 women would die from maternal mortality causes; and the number of additional infants and young children that would die during 1995-2000 would be between 5.2 to 9.3 million.

41. In its discussion of the paper, several delegations welcomed the clear analysis of possible negative consequences of resource shortfalls while noting the preliminary nature of the paper's analysis. Two delegations felt, however, that the paper confused working hypotheses with tested numbers and expressed

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concern that it presented hypothetical consequences as though they were a certainty. Many delegations praised the paper as an important contribution to the follow-up to the ICPD, particularly in its effort to begin a serious discussion on operationalizing the resource aspects of the ICPD Programme of Action and developing a joint resource strategy to assure its success. Some delegations considered the agreed ICPD targets for resource mobilization to be provisional estimates that needed to be further substantiated, especially the distribution of resources between the various components of the ICPD package. Others called for the paper to make explicit reference to data used and to describe in more detail the methodology for calculating consequences so that the analysis would stand up to close scrutiny.

42. After some discussion, the prevailing view was that the importance of the topic and the limited amount of time available precluded an in-depth consideration of the conference room paper. Those who had felt that there were certain deficiencies in the paper welcomed the opportunity for a revision that would, to the extent possible, take into account their comments. Therefore, the Executive Board decided to continue its discussion of the question of resource requirements for implementing the ICPD Programme of Action at a later date.

43. The Executive Board requested the Executive Director to revise the conference room paper on the consequences of resource shortfalls on meeting the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (DP/FPA/1997/CRP.1) and to submit the revised report as an official document to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1997.

III. UNFPA: EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

44. The report on evaluation activities, part of the Executive Director's Annual Report (DP/FPA/1997/10(Part III)), was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme). She said that the Fund's evaluation activities were taking place in an environment of increasing decentralization. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms had systematically been put in place throughout the Fund, and external evaluations were occurring with increasing frequency. The Fund's guidelines on monitoring and evaluation were being revised to emphasize qualitative aspects and to better reflect the programme approach. The revised guidelines included provisions for evaluation at the end of every programme. In 1996, UNFPA had completed two thematic evaluations -- one on the effectiveness of support to traditional birth attendants (TBAs) and the other on adolescent reproductive health. At the request of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), there had also been an external evaluation of staff training programmes at the Fund, and the results of that evaluation would be presented to the Board, through the ACABQ, at the third regular session 1997. In addition, an external evaluation of the technical support services (TSS) specialist posts was conducted and its findings would also be reported to the Board in September 1997.

45. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) detailed other efforts to improve monitoring and evaluation, including the training in logical framework techniques initiated in 1996 for many of the Fund's staff. In late 1995 the

Executive Director had initiated a system of policy application reviews to ensure accountability in country offices. The results of the first eight such reviews were summarized in the document presented to the Board. In late 1996 the Executive Director had established the Office of Oversight and Evaluation, reporting directly to her, as a focal point for monitoring follow-up to various oversight functions and to manage policy application reviews and major independent evaluations.

46. Following the introduction by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) several delegations commented on topics she had raised or that had been presented in the document. One delegation felt that the thematic evaluations, such as those on traditional birth attendants (TBAs) and adolescent reproductive health, were particularly valuable. The delegation requested more information on deliverables, i.e., on how the evaluations will lead to changes in programme design. It was also noted that the report presented to the Board stated that "advocacy as a thematic area presents conceptual difficulty". How was that situation being addressed?

47. One delegation was worried about the overwhelming demands on the UNFPA Country Support Teams (CSTs) and wondered whether there could not be greater reliance on the use of national experts. It suggested that greater use of national expertise required a change in the "mind set" of UNFPA Representatives. Another delegation said that it did not perceive in the report that the Fund was making the kind of integrated evaluation findings that would make it possible to really judge the effectiveness of UNFPA programmes.

48. One delegation welcomed the strong commitment to monitoring programme performance and felt that the establishment of the Office of Oversight and Evaluation was a very positive development. It also noted that technical exchanges concerning programme activities had increased among donors in recent years. In that regard, the recent evaluation workshop in London had shown that it was necessary to move to a standardized list of reproductive health indicators. Doing so would help not only UNFPA but other development partners working in the area as well.

49. One delegation, speaking for another as well, thanked the Fund for the very candid report on evaluation. In the evaluation of the Fund's programme in Papua New Guinea discussed in the document, what were the design lessons that had been gleaned? The evaluation clearly showed the need for greater focus, as well as for greater involvement by the Government, and the delegations wondered how the lessons learned were being utilized. The delegations were pleased that the summary of the evaluation of the TSS system addressed issues of impact. The delegations asked how the use of logical framework techniques would help in measuring performance. In sum, those delegations found that the paper was a broadly factual statement of activities in the area of evaluation that did not recommend courses of actions to address specific issues. But, in fact, those delegations felt that it was necessary to draw conclusions about lessons learned and transmit them throughout the organization.

50. One delegation asked for clarification on how the thematic evaluations pertained to regional programmes. The delegation felt that there was a need to increase effectiveness by stimulating more interaction between headquarters and

country offices. Another delegation stressed that the periodic reports on evaluation were indispensable for the Executive Board to do its job. The same delegation was concerned about the number of external evaluations that were being carried out. It asked that the evaluations be made accessible via the Internet; if that was impractical for all of the evaluations, then perhaps it would be possible to at least include summaries of the thematic evaluations. The ones on TBAs and adolescent reproductive health were particularly valuable and needed to be more widely disseminated. The delegation felt that there needed to be an ongoing evaluation of TSS. As for the policy application reviews, it was necessary to give attention to the difficulties enumerated, and the use of new concepts had to be carefully monitored.

51. One delegation, speaking for another as well, said that they were satisfied with the overall direction and coverage of the report on evaluation, but they were interested in the scope for the possibility of joint evaluations with other United Nations agencies and organizations. It welcomed the new Office of Oversight and Evaluation but was concerned that it concentrated too many functions in one office; after all, audit and oversight were very different from evaluation and policy reviews. It might be necessary to separate the functions in the future. These delegations mentioned several topics that they would like to see covered in future reports: a workplan for future evaluation activities; more discussion on how the findings were being disseminated; what criteria were established for carrying out recommendations; what was being done to see that the staff understood the new post-ICPD concepts. In referring to the post-ICPD concepts, these delegations felt that advocacy was crucial but seemed not to be accorded the importance it deserved - just because the results were not directly measurable did not mean that they were unimportant. Gender issues also seemed to be receiving a small share of total resources. Although gender was a cross-cutting issue, it also deserved concentrated efforts and follow-up as much as the three core programme areas.

52. One delegation pointed out that there had been a large number of evaluations. Perhaps it was possible to merge some of them in order to carry them out more efficiently? Was self-monitoring part of the standard design of projects? In that regard, another delegation said that in talking about evaluation it was clear that that term included several levels of evaluation, including monitoring, but those distinctions needed to be maintained - it was clear, for example, that the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) exercise was not evaluation. Likewise, internal oversight was distinct from evaluation and needed to be differentiated.

53. Another delegation noted that adolescent reproductive health was a great concern and that the results of the evaluation on that topic had to be used in its country and elsewhere. The point of operational activities was to build up capacity so that programme countries could carry out their own activities, and evaluations helped to achieve that. One institution should learn from another.

54. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) thanked the delegations for the positive comments they had made about the evaluation report. She said that of course one of the major preoccupations of the Fund was how to absorb and use the results of evaluations. There was, for example, a system for reviewing the results of thematic evaluations that included the drafting of a programme

advisory note that was then disseminated widely, including to all country offices and CSTs. The problem of conceptualizing advocacy was being resolved in new guidelines being issued to country offices. She agreed that national expertise should be utilized to the extent possible and that CSTs could not take care of all concerns. That was why the Fund was actively involved in drawing up rosters of national experts through the joint efforts of country offices and CSTs. She agreed that it was necessary to be more explicit about the intention of evaluation activities and that there should be a firmer link between headquarters and the field. She said that the Fund was undertaking the widest possible dissemination of the results of the thematic evaluations on TBAs and adolescent reproductive health. The results of the evaluation of the Papua New Guinea country programme were being utilized in the design of the new programme. She reported that the logical framework techniques did include explicit steps on monitoring and evaluation, but it would take time for all the staff to be trained in those techniques and a while before the results became apparent in the programmes themselves. She said that the thematic evaluations were set up to address perceived global needs.

55. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) agreed that there was a distinction between monitoring and evaluation; the distinction was clearly made in our activities but perhaps had not been clear enough in the report. In discussing those distinctions, the report had employed the generally used language, and she apologized if there had been confusion -- monitoring and the PRSD exercises were clearly not considered to be evaluation activities. Audits were not implemented by the Office of Oversight and Evaluation although the Office had responsibility for seeing that audit recommendations with Fund-wide implications were carried out. The number of evaluations varied greatly from year to year; 1996 had been an unusually high year because many programmes and, therefore, projects had expired, necessitating many evaluations. In the future, as the Fund moved more to a sub-programme approach, there would be an emphasis on more holistic evaluations, and country programme evaluations would be mandatory.

56. She agreed that the future evaluation workplan needed to be more explicit. For the information of the Executive Board, the thematic evaluations scheduled for 1997 were on Safe Motherhood and HIV/AIDS. In answer to questions as to whether all projects would be evaluated and whether there would be built-in self-monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in projects, she said that there would be greater use of such mechanisms, but there would not always be external evaluations. She reiterated that the Fund had completed an evaluation of staff training programmes, and a report would be presented to the Board for the third regular session 1997. She concurred that the Fund had perhaps not done enough in evaluating its gender activities, but more would be done in the future. UNFPA continued to support the overall United Nations focus on harmonizing indicators between agencies. She expected that the question of national execution would receive considerable attention in the absorptive capacity study that was being prepared for the Board's consideration the following year.

57. The Board decided to take note of the report on UNFPA evaluation activities (DP/FPA/1997/10, Part III).

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IV. UNFPA: WORK PLAN FOR 1998-2001

58. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the work plan for 1998-2001 and request for programme expenditure authority (DP/FPA/1997/7). He briefly reviewed the financial performance of UNFPA in 1996, emphasizing the slight reduction in income from regular resources compared to 1995, the consequent reduction in the regular resources used for project expenditures and the reduction in carry-forwards by $2 million from the end of 1995 to the end of 1996. In developing the proposed work plan for 1998-2001, UNFPA had used an estimate for 1997 income of $325 million and an annual increase in income of 7 per cent. This led to a total income for the work plan period of more than $1.5 billion, $84 million higher than the estimates for the 1997-2000 work plan period.

59. In reviewing the performance of the Fund in 1996, several delegations expressed support to the increasing trend of resource allocation in favour of Africa and of category "A" countries, which was also reflected in the planning figures of the 1998-2001 work plan. One delegation sought assurances that in applying Executive Board decision 96/15 on the allocation of resources, UNFPA would also bear in mind the merit of individual country programmes. Another delegation sought assurances that increased support for reproductive health activities would not mean a reduction in support for related information, education and communication activities.

60. With regard to the proposed work plan for 1998-2001, delegations generally expressed support for the financial planning figures and praised the reduction that had been made in the carry forwards. There were several questions as to whether maintaining the operational reserve at 20 per cent of income was appropriate or not. Several delegations commented that the 7 per cent estimated annual increase in income seemed too high. The figure was thought to be too optimistic, especially in light of the fact that regular resources had actually declined by 1 per cent from 1995 to 1996 and that official development assistance (ODA) was declining throughout the world. Some delegations also raised questions on the strategy that the Fund would adopt in the case of a shortfall in resources and wondered at the estimate that multi-bilateral resources would reach $25 million a year during the 1998-2001 period.

61. Delegations welcomed the efforts of UNFPA to keep the cost of administrative activities under control and not to decrease the share of income devoted to country programme activities, but some expressed concern regarding the increases foreseen in the work plan document for the administrative and programme support services (APSS) budget during the 1998-2001 period, especially in light of the current policy of decentralization of administrative activities.

62. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) responded to the concerns of the Executive Board regarding the estimated rate of annual income increase by informing the delegations that 7 per cent was the average of the annual increases in income experienced by the Fund over the past eight years and that therefore it should be considered as a safe long-term planning figure. He stressed that since the work plan was a rolling four-year plan, the estimated rate of increase would be revised annually in accordance with the actual

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contributions received. With respect to the strategy that the Fund would adopt in the case of a shortfall in resources, he pointed out that a greater predictability of contributions from donor countries would allow UNFPA to put into effect a better planning of resources, which in turn would reduce the risk of a shortfall in resources. He also underscored, in that regard, that past experience had taught the Fund that a 20 per cent operational reserve was essential in light of the uncertainty of income levels, and he added that nonetheless UNFPA would continue to monitor the reserve closely. With regard to the work plan estimation for multi-bilateral resources of $25 million a year for the 1998-2001 period, he informed the delegations that the estimate was based upon preliminary indications from individual donors and the European Union.

63. With respect to the concerns expressed about the APSS budget, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) explained that the APSS budget would be thoroughly discussed by the Executive Board in the context of the September session. He also emphasized that in the last two bienniums the Fund had been able to realize savings in its administrative expenses so that the allocated budget had not been fully utilized and added that the projected increase in the APSS budget was also the effect of underlying inflation and statutory cost increases.

64. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

97/11. Work plan for 1998-2001 and request for programme expenditure authority

The Executive Board

1. Endorses the programme resource planning proposals of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund set out in paragraphs 7 to 18;

2. Approves the request for the 1998 programme expenditure authority at a level equal to expected new programmable resources for 1998, currently estimated at $278 million;

3. Endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from regular resources for programme planning for the 1999-2001 period; $298 million for 1999; $318 million for 2000; and $341 million for 2001;

4. Also endorses the use of the following estimates of new programmable resources from multi-bilateral funding; $25 million per year for the years 1998-2001.

14 May 1997

V. UNFPA: PROGRAMMING PROCESS

65. Delegations expressed appreciation for the proposals contained in the document prepared for the Executive Board on Recommendations on the UNFPA programming process (DP/FP/1997/9), the main points of which were summarized by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme). Many delegations welcomed the proposal in the report to participate more actively in the programming process.

There was general agreement that an optimum time for input by members of the Board would be as part of the PRSD exercise when the strategic framework of the programme was being designed. However, several delegations reiterated that participation in the PRSD exercise by the representatives of individual member states was not the same as having the proposed programme scrutinized by Executive Board and the Board could not abdicate its governance responsibilities. Many delegations also stressed that the national sovereignty of the programme country must be the priority concern during the programming process and, thus, that the primary responsibility for that process must continue to rest with the Government and UNFPA. There was general agreement that any programme approval process that was adopted should not add to the administrative burden on UNFPA. One delegation suggested that whatever process was adopted should be reviewed after two years.

66. Several delegations mentioned that the programme process being considered did offer a good balance between the modalities currently being used by UNDP and UNICEF, both of which had their strong and weak points. It was stressed, however, that an ultimate goal should be to harmonize the processes of all three bodies. In discussing the details of the proposed programme approval process, one delegation commented that it would be necessary to establish a deadline to receive the comments of members once the programme strategy document had been circulated. Delegations concurred that once comments had been received informal discussions might be necessary to resolve any differences but that such discussions should be left to the discretion of the Fund, if it felt they were advisable. One delegation asked who would be responsible for paying for the costs of participation in the PRSD exercise.

67. Given the large number of country programmes that often needed to be considered, many delegations expressed the view that a "no-objection" process should be used, i.e., a country programme would be automatically approved unless members requested a formal consideration. There were differing views on the modalities for initiating such a formal consideration, with many feeling that the current UNDP rule that required a written request by five members was too restrictive. Some delegations noted that the term "no-objection" was misleading in the sense that it was not that members objected to a proposed programme but that they wanted to make comments and/or ask for clarifications. The opinion was also expressed that the no-objection policy could lead to the impression that certain countries were being singled out, and that had to be avoided.

68. One delegation expressed the view that the governing principles behind any proposal should be simplicity, professionalism and mutual confidence. Another delegation mentioned that Executive Board input could not be translated into action exhaustively; it had to be used to provide strategic guidelines for cooperation. In that regard, another delegation said that the role of the Board in the country programming process should be to follow up on the implementation of the ICPD. Several delegations mentioned that they had found the informal sessions with UNFPA Representatives to be particularly valuable and asked that they be continued. One delegation stated that it appreciated the emphasis on lessons learned, strategic proposals and programme outputs. One delegation, seconded by another, said that the role of the Fund should be expanded to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, such as rural communities, and the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS.

69. One delegation encouraged the Fund to use local expertise in conducting the PRSD missions while another reiterated the view that government representation in the process was crucial. There was a need to preserve national sovereignty, and it was not clear how early involvement of the Board would be reconciled with that. That same delegation questioned the notion of "give and take", as mentioned in document DP/FPA/1997/9, between the Fund and Executive Board members in developing programme strategy: the strategy had to be agreed upon by the Government and UNFPA.

70. In replying to the comments and questions of the delegations, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) stated that she was pleased that the Executive Board endorsed early involvement in the programming process and wanted to keep that process simple. She explained that the programming process had two main stages: first was the review and recommendations of the PRSD and, second, came the preparation of the country programme, which was undertaken jointly between the Government and UNFPA. She stressed that the wider consultation now being envisaged would be on the PRSD recommendations for UNFPA action since the country programme itself was the result of agreement between UNFPA and the Government. UNFPA considered that the role of the Government was central to the programming process. The Fund was revising its PRSD guidelines and one of the changes being made was to ensure that the PRSD process was nationally driven. Capacity-building was very important and was one of the aims of the PRSD process.

71. She said that she was pleased that the Executive Board had appreciated the difficulties involved for the Fund if it were necessary to present two formal documents, at different stages, for the Board's consideration, as was done under certain other programme approval processes. She said that the Fund would like to keep informal consultations with Board members on the programme recommendations optional: that would help to avoid delays because they might not always be necessary. In response to a question about languages, she informed the Board that the PRSD recommendations would necessarily be circulated in the language in which it was prepared, either English, French or Spanish. On the question of the costs of participating in the PRSD, she stated that it would be up to the participating country. The harmonization of procedures with other agencies and organizations was important, and she expected that the procedures would be revised as the current United Nations reform process took shape. She said that the Fund had been concentrating its programmes much more on addressing the needs of vulnerable groups.

72. Following informal consultations, the Executive Board adopted the following decision to take effect from 1 January 1998:

97/12. Recommendations on the programming process of the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on the programming process of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1997/9);

2. Recognizes that the primary responsibility for developing a country programme lies with the Government of the programme country with the support of the United Nations Population Fund;

3. Requests that in its programming process the United Nations Population Fund take into account the following, bearing in mind the need to limit the administrative burden:

(a) That during the Programme Review and Strategy Development process, the United Nations Population Fund will offer briefings at the field level for interested parties on the emerging findings;

(b) That the United Nations Population Fund will make available the summary of the Programme Review and Strategy Development process (the country recommendation), which will show: (i) proposed strategic actions and their rationale; (ii) the comparative advantage of the United Nations Population Fund and its complementarity vis-à-vis other actors; and (iii) possible thematic areas, drawing throughout also on lessons learned from other programmes;

(c) That the country recommendation will be made available by the secretariat to all members of the United Nations Population Fund, upon request, who may offer views on the recommendation, within six weeks of transmission, which the secretariat will take into account in further developing the programme; the United Nations Population Fund will inform the Executive Board of this process; these views will also be made available to all members of the United Nations Population Fund, upon request; the United Nations Population Fund may, if needed, arrange a discussion at headquarters with the participation of the programme country;

4. Requests that country programmes presented to the Executive Board contain clear statements of purpose, deliverables (for each sub-programme area), financial parameters and the indicators by which the United Nations Population Fund will measure programme performance, effectiveness and impact;

5. Decides that country programmes will be considered for approval by the Executive Board without discussion unless one is requested by more than one member, in writing, in principle two weeks before the session;

6. Recommends that the efforts of working towards harmonized arrangements for country programming processes in the United Nations system should, when possible, be coordinated and harmonized with other funds and programmes;

7. Requests that the operation of these arrangements be reviewed by the Executive Director at such a time as to allow a report to be presented to the Executive Board at its annual session 2000.

16 May 1997

VI. UNFPA: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

73. The Director of the Information and External Relations Division introduced the report on the UNFPA information and communication strategy (DP/FPA/1997/8). He began by explaining that the report had enjoyed substantial Executive Board collaboration through several informal meetings over the past year. The aim had been to find the best way to maximize the resources of UNFPA in its mission to promote awareness of population issues at all levels of society in both developed and developing countries. The Fund's strategy, as part of its overall role in advocacy, was to ensure that the principles, goals and objectives of the ICPD were understood and accepted as a commitment in all countries.

74. The Director outlined four kinds of activities to be undertaken as part of the global information and communication strategy: to increase awareness and understanding of the role and relevance of population in the development process and to build support for UNFPA's activities; to build support for all the goals of the ICPD; to mobilize the resources called for in the ICPD Programme of Action; and to provide assistance at the national level to build capacity in the areas of information and communication to support reproductive health and population and development strategies. These activities were in addition to national-level activities for advocacy and IEC that were part of country programmes. In that regard, he pointed out a display of UNFPA information and communication materials that included many items from programme countries.

75. He went on to say that the Fund was working with relevant NGOs in all donor countries. A poll had recently been conducted in European countries on public awareness of population issues and UNFPA, and its results had been disseminated in partnership with IPPF and 17 national European NGOs. The poll data reflected a low level of population issues but support for government development aid to support family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention and education. The task ahead was to better educate the public to generate understanding and support for the goals of the ICPD.

76. The Director informed the Board of certain steps that were being taken to improve communication: enhancements being made to the Internet connection and the Fund's World Wide Web page and continuing efforts to enlist prominent international personalities as "Goodwill Ambassadors" in various countries of the world. He stressed that the best advocacy was a good programme. Communicating was a difficult challenge and it was even more difficult to measure success, he emphasized. The Fund's advocacy role was essential to its success, and it had committed itself to do everything possible to promote the ICPD goals.

77. In the discussion that followed, the majority of delegations expressed appreciation for the consultative process that had been undertaken as part of the document's preparation. One delegation expressed the hope that the momentum would not be lost now that the strategy had been developed. Several delegations questioned whether the strategy described activities to be carried out in the future or those that were being carried out presently. A number of delegations said that the strategy's design should be an ongoing process. Stressing the importance of monitoring, several delegations suggested that oral reports on the

strategy's implementation be made at future meetings of the Executive Board. The need for linguistic balance in all UNFPA publications and on its web page was emphasized by a number of delegations. One delegation said that efforts should be made to avoid a situation where international and regional level activities were overemphasized at the expense of activities at the local level.

78. It was stated by one delegation that the report did not clearly distinguish between communication policies directed towards donor countries and advocacy undertaken at the national level as part of country programmes. Several delegations stressed that the Fund's work should take different forms depending on the culture concerned and emphasized the need for local adaptation of information materials and advocacy activities. It was suggested by one delegation that innovative communication strategies employed by certain NGOs would serve as good models for UNFPA.

79. One delegation said that activities designed to raise awareness about UNFPA would not be productive and suggested instead that advocacy focus on raising the profile of successful programme activities. Another delegation sought information on collaboration between UNFPA and other United Nations bodies in the field of information. A suggestion was put forward by one delegation (who spoke on behalf of a regional group) that UNFPA use the upcoming Olympics as a venue for raising awareness about population and development-related issues. Another delegation said that successful activities in programme countries should form the basis for technical cooperation among developing countries.

80. One delegation asked whether anything was being done to take the opportunity of "ICPD + 5" to engage a wider range of groups in discussions about reproductive health issues. Another delegation asked how the Fund's strategy fit in with overall United Nations efforts to improve its information and communication activities. Several delegations stressed that UNFPA should make full use of NGOs and grass-roots networks in implementing the communication strategy. Another delegation suggested that the strategy could benefit from identifying priority areas. One delegation stressed that particular attention must be paid to the least developed countries, which often lacked sophisticated technology, such as access to the Internet. It was also suggested by a number of delegations that priority be given to training activities.

81. Responding to points raised by delegates, the Director of the Information and External Relations Division said that advocacy was built into all country programmes and that the amount spent by UNFPA on global advocacy was very small. Materials produced internationally were designed to be locally adapted and were translated into local languages. Each country produced its own materials in local languages that were used at the grass-roots level.

82. Concerning the momentum of consultations, he said that it would certainly be maintained. That afternoon, for the first time, an informal briefing session would be held for Board members on the *State of World Population Report*. He said there was no confusion within the Fund about the necessity for activities that supported national programmes and advocacy undertaken at the global level. Advocacy and IEC projects were designed to support programmes as agreed upon by national Governments and UNFPA. The Fund had conducted advocacy training for

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field and headquarters staff. Such training aimed to help them understand and conceptualize how to advocate for the inclusion of population dimensions in development programmes, and to address ICPD goals in development financing. Training addressed such issues as target audiences and message content. Country representatives were expected to promote a population package as part of overall development. They were also advocates for the ICPD Programme of Action as a whole. Internationally, the focus was on the necessity of meeting the financial goals of the ICPD and building support for that.

83. The Director said that the Fund certainly viewed its information and communication strategy as evolving. Work plans were being developed each year that used the best possible means to get the Fund's message out. Concerning linguistic balance, he said that UNFPA produced its major materials in all six official languages of the United Nations. The *State of World Population Report* was produced in 23 languages. All programme materials were produced in local languages. He said that the Fund would look into doing more with different languages on the Internet, but added that the extent to which that would be possible would depend on the available resources. He went on to say that UNFPA was necessarily sensitive to all cultural dimensions and routinely tailored advocacy materials and messages to specific cultural contexts. The Fund was trying to use as many media as possible that were available and affordable.

84. Regarding activities to raise the Fund's profile, he said that according to a recent poll conducted by UNFPA in 13 European countries, organizations and issues that were best known received the most public support. Policy makers and parliamentarians said that they needed a stronger public understanding and support for the mission of UNFPA in order to advocate on its behalf. The public would not look kindly on governments that financed programmes that they did not understand or support. He said that plans were being made to make the most use of "ICPD + 5", which would also be the year that the world's population would reach six billion and that UNFPA would mark its thirtieth anniversary.

85. On the issue of coordination, he said that UNFPA was working extensively with many other United Nations agencies. For example, it was producing booklets on Safe Motherhood in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It had also produced the AIDS clock with UNAIDS. UNFPA was working with its partners in the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC). It was also pooling its resources with the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI), and had launched an 80-part radio series in collaboration with DPI. He supported the statements about the importance of working with non-governmental organizations and noted that UNFPA was currently doing so around the world, including with the IPPF. Further, UNFPA worked with civic groups, religious leaders, specific politicians and even the military in programme countries. He welcomed the suggestion about engaging the International Olympic Committee, but noted that such efforts were limited by the number of staff available. In response to the budgetary situation, efforts were being made to secure external sources of funding for some of these information and communication activities.

86. Agreeing that the strategy's development was an ongoing process, the Director said the report was meant to give an indication of where the Fund's

attention was focused and what it intended to do. Efforts were always made to plan ahead and find the most opportune time and circumstances to produce information materials. For example, a booklet on women and food security was issued in time for the World Food Summit, and the *1996 State of World Population Report* covered the issue of urbanization, in line with the holding of the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) that same year.

87. The Director of the Technical and Evaluation Division noted that many delegations had highlighted the need for country-specific IEC activities and their point was well taken. In relation to advocacy within the country programme context, he said there was a need to emphasize the ICPD goals; re-orient country programme work along ICPD lines; and, in some countries, rally political support, especially for programmes concerning adolescents. Community support should also be mobilized for reproductive health services and educational activities for adolescents. He said efforts were under way to increase South-South cooperation. Indonesia, for example, was sharing its IEC and advocacy experience with African and Asian countries.

88. The Director said that many of the activities of UNFPA in information and communication were at the country level. Reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, were the priority. In that domain, efforts were made to identify what could be done in collaboration with the Fund's partners, including governments, non-governmental organizations, the World Bank and others. He said that indicators were being developed to assess the impact of IEC and advocacy activities. Those indicators, which were in their early stages of development, would increasingly be built into the country programme framework.

89. The Executive Board adopted the following decision:

97/13. UNFPA information and communication strategy

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report on the United Nations Population Fund information and communication strategy (DP/FPA/1997/8) and the comments made thereon by the Executive Board;

2. Endorses the overall goal of the United Nations Population Fund information and communication strategy, which is to promote the principles, goals and objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development and to help turn these principles, goals and objectives into practical reality at the national, regional and international levels;

3. Further endorses the specific goals and corresponding strategies of the information and communication activities of the United Nations Population Fund as contained in paragraphs 4 and 22 of the report;

4. Stresses the importance of maintaining linguistic balance in the electronic dissemination of information;

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5. Also stresses that monitoring and evaluation are integral and important parts of information and communication activities and that there is a need to strengthen these functions, taking into account the difficulty, methodologically and operationally, of measuring the impact or effectiveness of such activities;

6. Requests the Executive Director to report orally each year, at the annual session, on the progress in the implementation of the present decision and on the coordinating efforts undertaken in this area within the United Nations system;

7. Also requests the Executive Director to review the Fund's information and communication strategy in four years and to report thereon to the Executive Board at its annual session 2001.

16 May 1997

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

VII. REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

A. Reports to the Economic and Social Council

90. The Administrator introduced his report to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1997/15), noting the great importance he placed on discussion of the item. He cited the common reporting format agreed on with other United Nations funds and programmes, the coverage in the report of follow-up to four related but distinct General Assembly resolutions, and the incorporation of comments and recommendations of the Executive Board on the report of the previous year.

91. He noted that the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 96/42 was directly linked to the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120. As Administrator, he served as Convenor of the Executive Committee of the Development Cooperation Group, one of the four sector groups created by the Secretary-General. As Convenor of the Executive Committee, he had prioritized the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/120 and the implementation of the Secretary-General's "track one" reform measures in the Development Cooperation Group. The Executive Committee, which met monthly, aimed to strengthen the resident coordinator system, the move to common premises and services, and to formulate a United Nations development assistance framework. On 8 April 1997, the Executive Committee had agreed to maintain the current arrangement regarding the resident coordinator system under the stewardship of UNDP, with the understanding that there would be major improvements in the way it functioned. He then described several aspects of the resident coordinator system that would be examined by the Executive Committee of the Development Cooperation Group. The Administrator elaborated on the comparative advantages of UNDP in leading the resident coordinator system. The leadership of the Administrator as Convenor of the Executive Committee of the Development Cooperation Group was coherent with that of UNDP as steward of the

resident coordinator system at the country level. He noted that the Development Cooperation Group had taken up the issues of common premises and services and the proposed development cooperation framework. The Office for United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS), which supported him in his role as Convenor of the Executive Committee, would be strengthened through future staff secondments from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

92. As one of the best examples of a coordinated system-wide undertaking, the Administrator also cited the work of inter-agency groups established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to constitute an integrated framework for follow-up to the major United Nations conferences. A workshop on the follow-up to conferences would be organized by OUNS and the ACC Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) in autumn 1997 at the Turin Centre, prior to continued review of the subject at the second session of ACC in 1997. The Administrator cited his interest in rationalizing the relationship between the process of the inter-agency groups and the intergovernmental reviews of the follow-up to conferences, including the need for more streamlined reporting arrangements. There could be, for example, reporting on each conference by lead agencies to the respective functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, with the support of the United Nations Secretariat. Similarly, reports based on the work of the three ACC Task Forces and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality would be prepared annually for the Council, coordinated by the Convenor of the Development Cooperation Group. Thus, both conference-by-conference reporting on overall implementation and reporting on United Nations assistance to programme countries would be possible.

93. In the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/43, the report (DP/1997/15) cited the measures taken to enhance collaboration between UNDP and the Bretton Woods institutions. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that UNDP was aware of the new directions taken by the management of the World Bank and hoped that dialogue with the Bank would be enhanced with a view to ensuring complementarity and a division of labour between the two organizations. He expressed the view that grant-based technical cooperation aimed at building key governance capabilities for sustainable human development should be the responsibility of UNDP.

94. In referring to the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227, the Administrator informed the Executive Board that UNDP was in the process of developing a comprehensive funding strategy. Owing to the number of informal consultations on other subjects, it had not been possible to hold informals to prepare the way for the funding strategy. He hoped that the paper would be available at the third regular session 1997 following discussions at the present session, at the informal consultations in June, and at the Economic and Social Council. Paragraphs 33 and 36 of document DP/1997/15 contained the kernel of a resource mobilization strategy, which would be further elaborated on in the paper. He cited the expected income for UNDP in 1997 to be an estimated $2 billion in total resources, with approximately $800 million of that amount in contributions to the core budget. He emphasized that while the target for the overall resource mobilization of UNDP would be the sum total of all resource mobilization targets of all country cooperation frameworks, the bedrock was the

contributions to the core budget. The core resource mobilization target of $3.3 billion for 1997-1999 contained in Executive Board decision 95/23 should be taken seriously. Despite reform and streamlining by UNDP and improvements in governance, as cited in General Assembly resolution 50/227, the contributions to the core budget continued to decrease. For UNDP to undertake all the work that it was responsible for and to respond effectively to the needs of developing countries, it would need increased contributions to its core budget. UNDP would like to move to a funding strategy that featured a more predictable base at a higher level than was currently the case.

95. In introducing the UNFPA reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/FPA/1997/10 (Part V)), the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) stated that coordination of operational activities was widely recognized as the overarching priority of the United Nations development framework. In that regard, UNFPA continued to work closely with all of its development partners, in, for example, chairing inter-agency task forces on the follow-up to international conferences, in participation in such mechanisms as the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), ACC and CCPOQ, and continuing its close cooperation with other agencies and organizations in strengthening the resident coordinator system.

96. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) informed the Executive Board that relations between UNFPA and the Bretton Woods institutions and funding for operational activities had been dealt with in the document as a build-up to the triennial policy review scheduled for 1998. The position of UNFPA on funding for operational activities was being coordinated with the United Nations Secretariat as part of the Secretary-General's report to the Economic and Social Council. The Fund was looking at new ways of collaborating with the Bretton Woods institutions within the terms of the UNFPA mandate. Other topics addressed in the report included harmonization of programme processes, national execution and national capacity-building, and monitoring and evaluation of UNFPA programmes.

General comments

97. Delegations welcomed the introductory remarks of the Administrator and the Deputy Executive Director and expressed their satisfaction with the reports to the Economic and Social Council of the Administrator (DP/1997/15) and the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1997/10 (Part V)), citing the improvements over those of previous years. Some speakers stated that more analysis and reference to problems faced by UNDP and UNFPA in implementing the legislation could be included in future reports to the Council. More information on linkages with overall United Nations reform would be welcomed. Delegations appreciated the fact that the reports employed a common format with other United Nations funds and programmes and noted that their contents illustrated progress in the follow-up and implementation of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions. A few delegations proposed that the reports include suggested recommendations to the Council on follow-up to resolutions. One delegation requested more clarity on data in the report of UNFPA relating to country-level operations and expressed support for a recommendation of the Executive Director to lessen and streamline reporting arrangements.

98. One speaker, on behalf of the African Group, underlined the support of that regional group for the work done by UNDP to follow up the resolutions of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, as cited in DP/1997/15.

Follow-up to implementation of General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 and to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/42

99. Many speakers welcomed the remarks made by the Administrator on the part of the report concerning the resolution, in particular with regard to the resident coordinator system and the increased commitment to partnership both at the headquarters and country levels. Much progress had been seen in the area, including on the harmonization of programme cycles and budget presentations. An update on programme delivery was requested, an area that many speakers stressed must continue to be a top priority of UNDP. One speaker, also on behalf of another, requested information on the 26 countries that would not have harmonized programmes by 1999. The rise in nationally executed programmes was welcomed and should be further increased. The issuance of the reference manual for operational activities was welcomed. Support for the leadership role of UNDP in the resident coordinator system was expressed. More information on the coordination of regional activities was sought.

100. Efforts to broaden the pool of resident coordinators coming from different United Nations organizations should be continued and enhanced. Some speakers requested that the Administrator continue to provide an update to the Executive Board at future sessions on the numbers of resident coordinators coming from outside of UNDP, as well as information on the staff secondments to OUNS. Many speakers emphasized the importance of strengthening the resident coordinator system and underlined the need for all organizations to be fully committed to that goal. One speaker cited the need for resident coordinators to be impartial and to function as a partner with others in the system. Another speaker requested further information about the cost of managing the resident coordinator system.

101. Several delegations urged UNDP to continue the move to common premises and services in order to fulfil the requirements of General Assembly resolution 50/120. The document (DP/1997/15) contained reservations on that issue in the view of some speakers. Some speakers supported the need to look at common premises and services on a case-by-case basis. One delegation stated that it was considering a "soft earmarking" of funding to promote common premises in 1997. Another delegation requested further information about the reference in paragraph 28 to the use of real estate management consultants by the JCGP Sub-Group on Common Premises and Services. A query was raised about whether there was a detrimental effect to harmonization when funds and programmes used different information systems.

102. The Administrator stated that the commitment of UNDP to common premises was complete and that the organization would pursue it vigorously.

103. Enhanced harmonization of monitoring and evaluation activities by UNDP was also encouraged.

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104. Several delegations welcomed actions undertaken by UNFPA, as described in the report, in the following areas: harmonization of programme cycles and programming procedures; national execution and national capacity-building; monitoring and evaluation; decentralization; and harmonization of budget presentations. The achievement of close to a 50:50 gender ratio of Professional staff was also welcomed. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, delegations welcomed the inclusion of lessons learned in country programme presentations. Several speakers welcomed the clear commitment of UNFPA to the resident coordinator system.

105. Many delegations supported the use by UNFPA of the programme approach and the role of the Executive Board in the programming process. They welcomed the decentralization of approval authority as a means to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of programme delivery. A few delegations questioned the effect that decentralization would have in terms of the procedures and role of the Fund's internal Programme Review Committee.

Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227

106. Several delegations looked forward to receiving the UNDP paper on funding, which they stated should include information on the consequences of declines in funding levels to the core budget. Many speakers expressed concern about the shortfall in contributions to core resources. Some delegations underlined that core resources ensured fairness and universality of assistance. Some speakers cited what they considered to be an unfair burden-sharing among donors, with concentration among only a few at the highest levels. Traditional donors and emerging donors should be encouraged to contribute more to UNDP core resources. A query was raised about the linkage between core and non-core resources, as stated in paragraph 37 of document DP/1997/15. One delegation, also on behalf of another, suggested that funding on a more predictable basis, such as for a three-year cycle, could be explored. Other suggestions for innovative funding mechanisms would be welcomed. While some speakers supported the target of doubling of the UNDP resource base, as stated in the proposals for change, others questioned the viability of that target.

107. One speaker expressed support for the government cost-sharing mechanism, which he stated had not been elaborated on in the document and thus more information on the mechanism was needed for a full debate on it. The majority of cost-sharing projects in his country related directly to sustainable human development or governance programmes.

108. One delegation informed the Executive Board that a request for increased funding to UNDP over its 1997 level, to $100 million, had been made for 1998. His delegation supported the effective use of resources by UNDP as a means to ensure greater contributions from major donors. In particular, UNDP programmes must have a clear focus and duplication with programmes of other organizations should be minimized. Further economization might be needed, including the consideration of closing some UNDP offices.

109. Some speakers requested further information about the modalities for tapping of the private sector as an additional source of funding, as cited in paragraph 36 of document DP/1997/15. Caution was advised in relation to that

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activity, as it was noted that private capital flows often went to only a small number of countries.

110. One delegation expressed the view that the role of UNDP at the Lyon Summit should have been included in the document.

111. With regard to UNFPA resources, many delegations welcomed the conference room paper on meeting the goals of the ICPD: consequences of resource shortfalls up to the year 2000 (DP/FPA/1997/CRP.1). Delegations noted that the paper, with its clear resource targets and goals, was a good contribution for further discussion on such issues as the ways and means for increasing core resources for operational activities. On the other hand, other delegations felt that the document suffered from certain insufficiencies: a confusion between working hypotheses and tested numbers, the imprecision of the sources, and the presentation of possible and hypothetical consequences as though they were a certainty. For those delegations, the report also erroneously presented as engagements of the international community at Cairo what were in fact provisional and estimated numbers that had been worked out by experts concerning the amount of resources that needed to be devoted to population programmes. The Executive Board requested that UNFPA refine the methodology contained in the paper and introduce it as a formal document at the third regular session 1997. A number of delegations supported the increase in programme resource allocations to Africa from 1995 to 1996. One delegation noted that proposed UNFPA initiatives on debt swaps would need to be examined in light of existing mechanisms for debt relief.

Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/36 and to decisions taken at major international United Nations conferences including implementation of the programmes of action adopted by them

112. Several delegations expressed support for the work of UNDP in relation to the implementation of the strategy outlined in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation for Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) publication entitled "Shaping the 21st Century" and the linkage of that strategy with the integrated framework for follow-up to United Nations conferences. One delegation emphasized the critical importance of country-level activities in that regard, and underlined the need for UNDP, in cooperation with bilateral donors, to play a leading role in local coordination of the follow-up to conferences and the DAC strategy. The delegation also requested information on the participation of UNDP in the World Bank/OECD-DAC/United Nations seminar on indicators, to be held in Paris on 20 and 21 May 1997. Positive comment was made about the UNDP role in coordination of the follow-up to conferences at both ACC and at country levels. The conference room paper on the 20/20 concept (DP/1997/CRP.20) was welcomed. Greater information on the follow-up to the World Food Summit was sought. The Administrator's proposals for enhancing the follow-up to conferences in intergovernmental forums was requested to be issued in writing.

113. Many delegations welcomed UNFPA activities in the follow-up to international conferences and, in particular, its role as Chair of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All. UNFPA participation in the other two ACC Task Forces was also cited positively.

Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/43

114. UNDP was encouraged to continue its cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, especially the World Bank. Several speakers noted their support for the formal agreements signed by UNDP with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. More detailed information on collaboration with the World Bank in poverty assessment and strategies was requested.

115. Several delegations stated that UNFPA should continue to strengthen linkages with other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and with bilateral partners. At the same time, the Fund should continue to promote and strengthen South-South cooperation. Collaboration with the World Bank at the country level should be further strengthened to ensure greater policy coherence.

Responses

116. The Administrator thanked delegations for their comments and responded to the queries raised. He noted that it was often difficult for UNDP to quantify the impact of its activities and more analysis would be undertaken in that respect. He would welcome the views of bilateral aid organizations on how to measure the relationship between resource availability and impact.

117. He emphasized the powerful link between reform in the United Nations and at UNDP. Reform at the United Nations had been carefully monitored and was taken into consideration in the change proposals put forward by UNDP. He agreed that the resident coordinator system must serve the system as a whole. UNDP must be increasingly dedicated to supporting that system.

118. In a total of 81 countries, the programming cycles of JCGP agencies would be harmonized by 1999. Although 26 programmes would still require harmonization, he stressed the strong commitment of UNDP to doing so. The Development Assistance Framework would ensure that programming cycles were harmonized.

119. He underlined the commitment of UNDP to common premises and noted that the move from ownership to rental would reduce the need for hiring real estate consultants. Some 17 commitments from other funds and programmes had been made to broadening the pool of resident coordinators. He cited the lack of response to advertisements for certain posts as a contributing factor to the move to widen the pool. An informal mechanism to explore the differences among JCGP members information systems had begun to operate in April.

120. The Administrator stated that UNDP would reach out to emerging donors for contributions to core resources. He was cautiously optimistic that some progress would be made in that area, but emphasized that contributions from traditional donors could not be replaced. UNDP would proceed cautiously in raising money from private sources. He confirmed that UNDP was contributing its ideas to the discussion at the Economic and Social Council on innovative sources of financing. He noted that the decline in core contributions was linked to an overall decline in official development assistance (ODA). The United Nations share of ODA must be increased. In that regard, UNDP could manage twice the

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amount of resources it had at the present time. He welcomed an informal discussion with the Executive Board on resource mobilization. In response to the query raised, he stated that increased contributions to core could indeed provide an impetus to increased non-core contributions, as cited in paragraph 37 of the document. He informed the Board that he would make a separate presentation on programme delivery later in the session.

121. In response to queries raised, he noted that UNDP had played a role in both the Lyon Summit and in developing the DAC strategy. The follow-up to the World Food Summit as a more recent conference had not moved along as far as that of the other conferences. He noted that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and ACC had agreed that the follow-up would occur within the framework of the integrated follow-up to conferences.

122. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration), in response to a query raised, explained that at present, programmes and subprogrammes and some projects were approved by the Programme Review Committee. UNFPA would strive towards greater decentralization in order to enable the country offices to approve all projects and the details of the subprogrammes. With regard to collaboration with the World Bank, he noted that such collaboration was well established through work at the country level in programme development and in consultations between World Bank officials and UNFPA geographical division heads on strategies aimed at ensuring coherence. UNFPA and the World Bank also collaborated, inter alia, in South-South cooperation and in the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme. UNFPA was working with the World Bank and OECD/DAC on refining indicators for sustainable development.

123. The President informed the Executive Board that the issue of resource mobilization in UNDP would be taken up in informal consultations in June 1997.

124. The Executive Board took note of the reports of the Administrator on reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1997/15) and the report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council (DP/FPA/1997/10 (Part V)) and the comments made therein, and decided to transmit the reports to the Economic and Social Council.

B. Internal oversight and accountability

1. UNDP

125. The Administrator introduced the addendum to his annual report for 1996 on internal audit and oversight activities (DP/1997/16/Add.6). The UNDP comments on the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) were provided in document DP/1997/CRP.20.

126. Delegations welcomed the first annual report of the Administrator on internal audit and oversight. The report was comprehensive and demonstrated the increased attention to strengthening internal oversight and the overall accountability culture in UNDP. There was wide support for the continued practice of having a separate section of the report of the Administrator on internal audit and oversight. Some speakers requested that future reports

include information on lessons learned and best practices in the area of internal audit and oversight.

127. The staff shortage in the Division for Audit and Management Review (DAMR) was of great concern to many delegations and would be examined carefully in the context of the discussion on the next biennial budget.

128. Some speakers requested more information on how the change management process would affect the internal audit and oversight functions, including with regard to decentralization. The need for appropriate staff training was underlined. One delegation, also on behalf of another, requested further information on how goal achievement would be assessed and monitored.

129. Several delegations underlined the need to strengthen oversight of nationally executed projects. The intention of DAMR to follow up on the issues that arose from the national execution audit missions, as described in the document, was welcomed. One speaker expressed the view that a standardized format could be created for investigations undertaken by funds and programmes in accordance with that of OIOS. One delegation requested an update on the Reserve for Field Accommodation.

130. One delegation stated that it could not accept the reference in paragraph 19 of document DP/1997/16/Add.6 regarding the relationship between resident coordinators and United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) Directors, as any change in that relationship was contingent upon the reform measures to be proposed by the Secretary-General. The speaker requested that in taking note of the report, the Executive Board should have a reservation on that paragraph.

131. Queries were raised on a number of issues raised in the report, including on the implications of outsourcing of internal audits, best practices in situations where banking services did not exist, audit services for the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the 17 per cent of recommendations from audits that were not accepted. More information on certifying and approval functions was also requested.

2. UNFPA

132. For consideration of agenda item 8, the Executive Board had before it the report of the Executive Director for 1996: UNFPA internal audit and oversight activities in 1996 (DP/FPA/1997/10 (Part IV)). The UNFPA comments on the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, as contained in document A/51/801, were provided in conference room paper DP/FPA/1997/CPR.4.

133. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) introduced the report, highlighting recent initiatives taken by UNFPA to strengthen internal oversight mechanisms. A critical step to that end had been the establishment of the Office of Oversight and Evaluation, which fulfilled central oversight functions and ensured, among other tasks, follow-up to the findings of audit and oversight exercises with fund-wide implications. Regarding internal audit coverage, he emphasized that not only the quantity but the scope of activities had expanded significantly in 1996, including in-depth reviews of procedural issues by the Audit Section. Major audit findings included weaknesses in

programme management, especially inadequate management of legal documents of projects and project audit requirements. Corrective actions taken to address these weaknesses were nearing completion. The Deputy Executive Director also noted that ratings for compliance and internal controls in the 53 UNFPA offices audited in 1996 were, in general, satisfactory, and he reiterated the commitment of UNFPA to sound internal oversight.

134. Delegations welcomed the first annual report of the Executive Director on internal audit and oversight and noted its usefulness for dialogue on these important issues between the Board and UNFPA. One delegation requested additional information about the organizational arrangements between the internal audit function and the Office of Oversight and Evaluation in UNFPA. Since the auditing cycle was not considered optimal in the report, more information was requested about the staff resources available in the Audit Section and how the constraints were being addressed. More information was also requested on the substance of audit activities and problems found. It was pointed out that weaknesses discussed in the UNFPA report showed that recommendations of the United Nations Board of Auditors had not yet been implemented. References were made to the discussion of the report of the Board of Auditors at the first regular session of the Executive Board in January 1997 and the Board's decision at the time to receive annual follow-up reports on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

135. One delegation questioned the largely positive ratings for country offices, only four of which had been found deficient by the contracted audit firms. The delegation asked for clarification on the ratings in the context of quality concerns expressed about contract audits. Questions were also raised about the inspection and investigation functions in UNFPA which had not been addressed in the report. Regarding the issues of resources, one delegation foresaw the strengthening of capacity only in the context of the continued integration of the UNFPA internal audit function in the UNDP Division for Audit and Management Review (DAMR). Several delegations suggested that, in the future, the format of the UNFPA report should follow more closely that of UNDP.

Response of the Administration

136. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) noted that the UNFPA report had to be read in conjunction with the report of the Administrator, since DAMR/UNDP was also the internal audit arm of UNFPA, as emphasized by the Director, DAMR. Thus, certain aspects were not reiterated. In that role, DAMR/UNDP also provided inspection and investigation services for UNFPA, as needed. Concerning staffing levels, he explained that the UNFPA Internal Audit Section was composed of two Professionals (including the Chief of the Section) and one support staff. Despite such limited staff resources, increases in audit coverage had been achieved through the use of the UNDP Regional Service Centres in Harare and Kuala Lumpur and through the recruitment of consultants.

137. With regard to the requests for more substantive information on audit findings and follow-up since the first regular session 1997, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) stressed that the reports of the Board of Auditors drew explicitly on internal audit findings, as all internal audit communications were shared with the External Auditor. Thus, the substance

of the audit findings were indeed well known to the Executive Board. However, he emphasized that progress had been made and that many initiatives mentioned by UNFPA at the first regular session were now nearing completion, such as the financial management review and the thematic evaluation of execution modalities, which included national execution. Additional measures to ensure compliance with project audit requirements under national execution had also been discussed at length with the External Auditor on the previous day. Given the scope of the changes under way, it was hoped that the new procedures would become operational by the third quarter of 1997.

138. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) requested the President to invite the Chief of the UNFPA Office of Oversight and Evaluation to provide additional information about the work of the Office of Oversight and Evaluation in the context of the current discussion.

139. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) noted that the functions of the Office of Oversight and Evaluation had also been discussed in more detail under agenda item 3 of the current session. He emphasized that the Office had been established, inter alia, to analyse the findings and recommendations of oversight exercises, including internal and external audit reports, mid-term reviews and evaluation reports to identify issues where action at the organizational level was needed with respect to policy or procedural development. In addition, the Office managed policy application reviews in UNFPA country offices to look at compliance with policies and procedures. Such reviews were also intended to examine the relevance of policies and procedures for UNFPA field operations. Finally, the Office managed ad hoc independent evaluations, using experts recruited from outside of the Fund as evaluators. She mentioned that coordination meetings had taken place with the Board of Auditors and the Internal Audit Section to coordinate work plans. Policy application reviews would be combined with one external and one internal audit mission in 1997 to explore how synergies could be maximized. Regarding staff resources, the Office was composed of the Chief, four Professionals and four support staff.

3. Comments on the report of the Secretary-General

140. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services addressed the Executive Board. He noted the significant changes in oversight functions during recent years. The record achieved so far by the OIOS had led to an increased awareness of issues concerning internal oversight throughout the United Nations system. He recalled the discussion at the second regular session 1996 on the then draft report of the Secretary-General on enhancing internal oversight in the operational funds and programmes, which had been issued as document A/51/801. The goal of the report of the Secretary-General was to create a common framework for internal oversight functions throughout the United Nations. He commended the Administrator and the Executive Director for their first annual reports on internal audit and oversight activities. With regard to the comments of UNDP and UNFPA on the report of the Secretary-General, he noted that the Administrator was in general agreement with the direction of the report. He commended the Administrator for the action already taken in implementing the recommendations in the report.

141. Many delegations requested that UNDP implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on internal oversight mechanisms in operational funds and programmes (A/51/801) as early as possible.

142. One speaker noted that the internal oversight mechanisms in individual funds and programmes had developed at different paces. One delegation queried whether the Under-Secretary-General had any comments on the discussion of the World Food Programme (WFP) report on internal oversight at its Executive Board, as it had taken place prior to those of UNDP and UNFPA. Another delegation sought information about a possible overlap in the activities of OIOS and the United Nations Board of Auditors.

143. A few speakers were concerned that recommendation 7 of document A/51/801 would not allow the Executive Board, as the primary legislative body for UNDP and UNFPA, to undertake its proper governance role. One speaker noted that his delegation did not support recommendations 7 and 8 of document A/51/601, stating that those proposals could weaken and limit internal oversight mechanisms in funds and programmes. A query was raised about the mandate of OIOS in relation to the funds and programmes.

144. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services responded to the comments raised. He stated that he was generally pleased with the approach WFP had taken with regard to internal oversight. He stated that the management oversight committee in UNDP had been operating effectively. With regard to possible overlap in oversight functions, he preferred to view them as synergistic rather than duplicative. Experiences were being shared between the Division of Audit and Management Review and OIOS, and in some cases efficiencies could be achieved by providing services for one another, especially at the country level. In response to queries about the reporting channels, he stated that OIOS reports were submitted to the General Assembly for its information. He maintained that the Executive Board would continue to fulfil its general oversight role with regard to UNDP. He did not agree with the interpretation of General Assembly resolution 48/218 (b) of one representative, who had stated that OIOS did not have a United Nations-wide mandate. In that regard, the authority of OIOS extended to the separately administered funds and programmes. However, the authority of the office was understood as an authority complementary to existing internal oversight mechanisms in the individual funds and programmes. It was not meant to render ineffective or replace the internal mechanisms of those funds and programmes. The philosophy of OIOS was to give an example of cooperation and coordination in the internal oversight field that would be in the best interests of Member States.

145. The Director, DAMR responded to the queries raised on behalf of UNDP and UNFPA. He underlined that DAMR had control and supervision over outsourced services. With regard to follow-up, some recommendations could be confirmed as having been taken up only when another audit took place. DAMR worked closely with contractors to ensure quality audits and had arranged for follow-up audits of UNDP or UNFPA offices which had not received satisfactory ratings from the sub-contractors. He noted there were few alternatives to the present system in countries with no banking services. On national execution, he stated that the audit findings had been shared with the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning (OESP). He noted that OESP evaluated the achievement of

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programmes/projects objectives while DAMR examined management systems and the efficient use of resources. He confirmed that a shortage of staff resources was a serious issue as it hindered adequate auditing services for UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services. DAMR was undertaking management reviews of the certifying and approving and of the procurement functions. The issues that arose with regard to national execution would be a subject that could be included in the 1998 report to the Executive Board. He noted that internal audit and oversight functions pertaining to decentralization would be undertaken in the context of the accountability framework which was under review by the Executive Board. The Director informed the Board that he would respond to specific individual queries in writing on a bilateral basis.

146. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/16. Internal audit

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the format of the reports on internal audit of the United Nations Development Programme (DP/1997/16/Add.6) and of the United Nations Population Fund (DP/FPA/1997/10, Part IV);

2. Takes note of the content of these reports and of the observations made by delegations during the debate;

3. Supports the proposals of the Administrator and Executive Director to strengthen the internal audit function of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund.

23 May 1997

UNDP SEGMENT

VIII. UNDP: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

Introduction, main programme record, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, statistical annex, reports of the Joint Inspection Unit

147. The Administrator introduced the introduction to his annual report for 1996, the main programme record, and sections on assistance to the Palestinian people, the statistical annex, and reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (DP/1997/16/Add. 1,3,5 and 8). The introduction and main programme records were presented in a new format aimed at addressing the concerns of the Executive Board for a more focused, analytical and issues-oriented report. The methodology used was to identify achievements, constraints and actions taken with regard to constraints. He noted that for future annual reports, the quality would be further improved in the areas of data collection, systematic analysis throughout the year, and greater linkage with lessons learned from

evaluation. The year reviewed had been a year not only of change but also of great output and increased productivity.

148. Following a brief overview of the issues contained in the annual report, the Administrator outlined the efforts of UNDP in the three priority areas of poverty eradication, gender mainstreaming, and delivery and resources. He also noted that UNDP would be reporting to the Executive Board in 1998 on the experience gained in implementing the new programming arrangements. The current resource situation, he underlined, would complicate the implementation of Executive Board decision 95/23 as the incentive system envisaged under that decision was being compromised by a low level of resources. The gap between the needs of programme countries for UNDP-supported operational activities in the areas of concentration adopted by the Board and the core resources available was widening. An appropriate funding strategy for UNDP that would ensure greater availability and predictability of core resources would be discussed in informal consultations during June. In closing his remarks, the Administrator praised the efforts of UNDP staff on improving performance while preparing to implement change, in particular those who worked at the country level. UNDP was committed to building on the work accomplished in 1996 and, in the context of the implementation of change, hoped to achieve significant progress in the year ahead.

149. Many delegations praised the improvement in the format and content of the annual report of the Administrator, citing its increased analysis of constraints faced, enhanced focus, and inclusion of lessons learned. The statement of the Administrator was also welcomed. The three priority areas were crucial and could be fully supported. Some speakers stated that more could be done to address the constraints faced, including strengthening the focus on sustainable human development. One speaker emphasized the need to produce an annual report that could be communicated to a wider audience.

150. Several speakers underlined the need for UNDP to take into account the development priorities of programme countries. Particular activities undertaken by the respective regional bureaux were recognized in a number of interventions. The need to align staffing of country offices among the regions as well as the level of leadership of the regional bureaux, as legislated in the Consensus, was underlined by several delegations. One speaker requested the Administrator to inaugurate the Bratislava support centre in July 1997. The added value of national human development reports was underlined by several speakers.

151. Several speakers expressed support for the Administrator's proposals for change, in particular the steps taken to strengthen audit and accountability and strengthening of the resident coordinator system.

152. Despite the many constraints that remained in the area of poverty eradication, the work of UNDP, particularly in comparison with other funds and programmes, was welcomed. The sharpening of the UNDP focus would help to move the organization in the right direction. The usefulness of public/private partnerships and the need for closer cooperation with the World Bank and other organizations in poverty eradication were underlined by many speakers. In that regard, some speakers stressed the need to develop a common set of indicators on poverty eradication, in particular in cooperation with the Organization for

Economic Cooperation for Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC).

153. The decrease in core funding was lamented by many delegations. In order to support continued and increased funding to core resources, one delegation underlined the need for transparency and accountability, as well as publicity about results, in order to obtain public support. Some speakers noted that while they did not oppose the use of non-core funding, an adequate level of core funding was necessary, and in that regard, agreement on the size of the core budget should be reached. One speaker drew attention to the large amount of resources obtained through cost-sharing in Latin American programmes and expressed some doubt that it could be considered resource mobilization since it was not additionality. Clarification of the reference to country offices providing support to nationally executed projects was also sought. The funding strategy paper should contain scenarios with the consequences of different funding levels. Further information on expenditure by region in sectoral areas was requested. One speaker underlined the need for UNDP to make economies wherever possible, including through the closure of country offices. One delegation sought further information on the use of Global Environment Facility resources, including its Small Grants Programme, in the Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States region.

154. Measures to improve programme delivery were commended. Some speakers noted the need to combine an increase in delivery with an emphasis on the quality of the programmes. Reports on problems in programme delivery should be given by all regional bureaux.

155. While many speakers supported the increased links with non-governmental organizations, some underlined the need to pursue linkages with civil society only at the discretion of Governments. More information on the modality for NGO execution of projects was sought.

156. One delegation requested further information on the role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women in assisting UNDP in gender mainstreaming. The strategy of UNDP with regard to gender mainstreaming must be strengthened, some speakers stated. In that regard, the use of United Nations Volunteer specialists as gender advisers could only be a temporary measure. Speakers also underlined the need to attain previously set goals with regard to gender parity in UNDP.

157. Speakers sought more information on the activities of UNDP at the country level within the UNAIDS programme, on assistance to countries in special situations, on the expected value added of the FIMS module, and on the role of UNDP in microfinance programmes. One speaker underlined the importance of the International Vaccine Institute as a positive example of South-South cooperation. The linkage of United Nations missions to Internet access by UNDP was commended.

United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa

158. The Acting Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the annual report of the Administrator on the United Nations System-wide Special

Initiative on Africa (DP/1997/16/ADD.2). He emphasized the high priority given to ensuring ownership and leadership of the Initiative by Africa, and the sustainability of the United Nations system commitment to support that objective. He noted agreement reached on utilizing round-table and Consultative Group processes as appropriate resource mobilization mechanisms and sector investment programmes as a means of channeling resources into priority areas of education, health, water and food security at the country level. Examples of country-level Special Initiative activities were provided in the statement. In looking to the future, the Acting Director underlined the need to focus on increased country-specific activities, continued advocacy at the highest levels of intergovernmental mechanisms, implementation of appropriate communications strategy, continuation of the work to utilize the Special Initiative as an implementation mechanism for the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UN-NADAF), and the adoption of realistic benchmarks for monitoring, measuring and evaluating progress in the implementation of the Special Initiative.

159. The Administrator underlined the active participation of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in the Special Initiative. He noted progress being made in the priority areas of education, health, water, governance, and the organization of the African Governance Forum to take place in Addis Ababa in July 1997. He also cited the linkages between the Special Initiative and the recommendations of the mid-term review of UN-NADAF, as well as other bilateral and multilateral donor initiatives, such as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development II, the OECD/DAC publication entitled "Shaping the 21st Century"; and aspects relating to resource mobilization.

160. Many delegations cited positive aspects of the Special Initiative, such as the collaboration between organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and in particular, the overall priority given to African ownership and leadership. It was hoped that progress and tangible results could be shown in the future, especially at the country level. The Special Initiative was seen as being fully in line with ongoing United Nations reforms.

161. While there was overall support among delegations in favour of the Special Initiative, several speakers stated that greater efforts were required in the areas of information and resources mobilization. Reporting on the Special Initiative by the World Bank and the Regional Commission for Africa would be desirable. One delegation suggested that the South-South cooperation should be enhanced in the context of the Special Initiative.

162. Queries were raised regarding the initiatives of the Organization to harmonize business law in Africa (OHADA), prospects for funding of the Special Initiative, coordination with UN-NADAF, and the participation of the World Bank. Some delegations requested further information on the comparative advantages of the sector investment programmes approach. Enhanced dialogue with the Executive Board on progress in the implementation of the Special Initiative was encouraged.

163. The Acting Director noted that UNDP shared many of the concerns raised by delegations. The coordinated effort of the United Nations system to enhancing

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technical cooperation with Africa was sought. He commented on the resource mobilization issue, consultations with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the least developed countries (OSCAL) on linkages between the Special Initiative and UN-NADAF, and the responsibility of African countries in identifying the sectors in which they wished to undertake activities under the Special Initiative. The resource mobilization targets did not represent only additionality but also included what Governments intended to fund within a certain sector. Consultations with OSCAL had demonstrated linkages between the original goals of the UN-NADAF and the recommendations of its mid-term review. Appropriate support was being extended to OSCAL to strengthen their capacity to help in operationalizing the link between UN-NADAF and the Special Initiative. The World Bank worked with other United Nations agencies in adopting sector investment programmes as mechanisms for channeling resources to certain priority areas at the country level. The typology adopted allowed for all countries to be eligible to participate and benefit from the Special Initiative. The African Governance Forum, being organized for July 1997, would allow African countries to present their governance programmes, share information and experience among themselves and with their external partners with the view to mobilizing resources.

164. The Administrator underlined the main objective of the Special Initiative: to ensure that the United Nations system acts together in the implementation of the Cairo Plan of Action on African Development. It was hoped that more resources for Africa could be mobilized through networking and greater collaboration among development partners. These resources needed to be spent more efficiently and should result in greater additionality over time.

165. The President suggested that the Executive Board continued to hold informal discussions on the Special Initiative. In that regard, a delegation proposed that an informal meeting be convened during the time of the Special Session of the General Assembly in June 1997.

166. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Administrator on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (DP/1997/16/Add.2) and comments made thereon.

Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP)

167. The representative of Palestine expressed gratitude for the assistance provided by UNDP. He underlined the deterioration of the economic situation during 1996 in the Occupied Territories, a factor which would endanger the peace process in the region and urged the international community to promote an environment in the region that would enable the peace process to continue. The use of "West Bank and Gaza" in document DP/1997/16/Add.3 should be replaced with "Occupied Territories". Another delegation, while praising the work of PAPP, requested that the Executive Board avoid political discussions while reviewing the report.

168. Several other speakers commended the work of PAPP. The severe economic downturn in the Occupied Territories caused by the closing of its borders was of great concern. Employment generation and environment projects assisted by UNDP were having an impact. Information on cooperation by UNDP with the United

Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and on support to governance and institution-building was sought.

Response by Administrator

169. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for the comments made on the annual report for 1996. Contributions for the core budget for 1996 and 1997 had been calculated on the basis of 1995 exchange rates, he noted, which had been responsible for the decline between 1996 and 1997 in core contributions. He agreed that the results of activities funded by core contributions should be projected more vigorously and stated that a new format for the illustrated annual report would report those results to a wider audience. Resources for publicity were quite limited, however. As for non-core contributions, he informed the Board that their distribution did not differ radically from core contributions in terms of focus areas.

170. Progress had been achieved in reaching gender targets in staffing although it was hoped that faster progress would be made. He cited the total of 12 female resident representatives serving at present, whose number was anticipated to reach 30 in 1998. In response to another query, he noted that some 40-45 per cent of resident representatives had served in United Nations organizations other than UNDP. By the end of 1997, it was expected that 17 staff members from other United Nations organizations would be offered positions as resident coordinator.

171. Collaboration in all but 15 countries on national human development reports was expected in 1997.

172. The PAPP was an excellent example of multi-bi cooperation and a useful model for other situations with large amounts of non-core funding.

173. The Associate Administrator, in response to a query, explained that country strategy notes were a result of General Assembly legislation, with the formulation entirely up to the Government concerned. The advisory note was a UNDP-owned document that was based on consultations with its partners. The Government determined the form of the country cooperation framework. Consultations on advisory notes were held with bilateral and multilateral donors as well as civil society organizations. The draft advisory note was approved by the Programme Management Oversight Committee and then sent to the country office for transmittal to the Government. The Government then decided on the content of the country cooperation framework. With regard to an enhanced role for UNIFEM in gender mainstreaming in UNDP, he noted that the proposals for change included UNIFEM in the operational cluster. Enhancement of the interaction of the Fund with regional bureaux, the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation for Developing Countries, and the United Nations Capital Development Fund was sought. One method of increasing that interaction would be through the representation of UNIFEM on the Programme Management Oversight Committee.

174. With regard to programme delivery, the Associate Administrator referred to the references to programme quality contained in the Administrator's "Direct Line 12" sent to all resident representatives. In 1997, delivery was expected to reach $681.7 million. He informed the Board that delivery figures referred

to expenditures. He noted, with regard to delivery, that if there was no indication of an increase in resources to the core budget, delivery would have to be slowed in future years. If resources remained as they were, UNDP would have to slow its programme delivery or would face the risk of running out of money and having to draw from the operational reserve. The FIMS budget module would be operational on 1 July 1997, allowing for better tracking of how resources were spent in each sectoral area.

175. In response to the query raised, the Associate Administrator noted that the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support and the United Nations Capital Development Fund had been requested to propose methods of synergy in their work in microcredits.

176. The Assistant Administrator and Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, in response to a query raised, stated that cost-sharing was a means of mobilizing resources for sustainable human development. Administrative costs in country offices in the region had been lowered, with the regional average at about 10 per cent.

177. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support noted that the issue of UNDP participation in the UNAIDS programme would be taken up under a separate item. In response to another query raised, he stated that resources would be available from the Global Environment Facility for the Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States region.

178. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs informed the Executive Board that the annual report of the Administrator had been prepared in consultation with Board members. Suggestions for further improvements would be considered. The focus and targets with regard to public information materials would be improved.

179. The Special Representative of the Administrator informed the Executive Board that PAPP worked with UNRWA in employment and job creation schemes, water projects and education. He thanked the Government of Japan for its contributions to the Programme.

180. The Executive Board took note of the annual report of the Administrator (DP/1997/16, Adds. 1,3,5 and 8) and the comments made thereon. The Board also took note of the report of the Administrator on the outcome of the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (DP/1997/L.9).

Evaluation

181. The Administrator assured the Executive Board of the importance attached to evaluation and monitoring in UNDP. He noted the follow-up to Executive Board decision 96/20 in which the Board had asked UNDP to take steps to foster the firm establishment of evaluation and monitoring in the management culture of the organization.

182. He outlined the system for selecting subjects for evaluation through a broad-based consultative process. The procedures of UNDP for monitoring and

evaluation had been streamlined and included clearer guidance on the planning and conduct of evaluations. Monitoring and evaluation had now been linked to personnel management, with staff held accountable for compliance. UNDP had led efforts to harmonize United Nations system procedures for evaluation and had taken part in a number of joint evaluation activities. The findings of strategic and thematic evaluations were now reported to the Executive Board and published for external distribution. The Administrator noted that whereas considerable progress had been made in strengthening evaluation, much more needed to be done. He expressed his concern with the levels of evaluation compliance. The change process and the need to sharpen the focus of UNDP offered special opportunities to strengthen the culture of evaluation within the organization. The Administrator would be working with the Executive Committee, the Programme Management Oversight Committee (PMOC) Secretariat, and the Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning (OESP) to ensure further improvements in the level of compliance and in the tracking of follow-up to recommendations emanating from evaluations. He noted that OESP would remain an independent unit reporting to him directly.

183. The Director of OESP introduced the annual report of the Administrator on evaluation (DP/1997/16/Add.4), which highlighted the findings of evaluations. Those findings covered the following areas: participation of beneficiaries; clarity and realism in project and programme objectives; baseline data and performance indicators; learning culture; and multiplicity of procedures. She stated that those issues were not new, but remained paramount to the ability of UNDP to produce and demonstrate results. She indicated that the practice of compliance reporting had begun to show results. Overall compliance rates were nevertheless still not satisfactory. The reporting of compliance was, however, evidence of organizational transparency. The priorities established by OESP for the following three years included: support to training and capacity development in country offices and through them to programme countries; improving methodologies for measuring performance and impact; and promoting the dissemination and absorption of lessons learned from evaluation.

184. Delegations expressed their general satisfaction with the annual report of the Administrator on evaluation. The report indicated an improvement in quality and scope of evaluation activity and also demonstrated transparency in organizational reporting. Many speakers underscored the idea that evaluation was a mechanism for ensuring the quality of programmes and thus needed to be integrated into all stages of programme development and implementation. Evaluation was, moreover, a critical element of organizational development and transparency. Information about results was a prerequisite for future funding by donors of development assistance. It was important to strengthen the capacity of OESP in order to ensure the credibility and impact of the evaluation function.

185. Continued concern was raised by several delegations regarding the levels of compliance with evaluation requirements. The Director of OESP informed the Executive Board that some dramatic improvements in evaluation compliance had been recorded since the compilation of data for the annual report of the Administrator, in particular in the Regional Bureau for Arab States and the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support. Current evaluation compliance rates were nevertheless still not satisfactory. Efforts would be intensified to

include observance of evaluation compliance in review of managerial performance and, where necessary, sanctions would be imposed on managers whose performance was lacking in that regard.

186. Discussion continued on the importance of incorporating the findings and lessons learned from evaluations into planning and decision-making at various levels of the organization. UNDP had adopted a policy of publishing all thematic and strategic evaluations undertaken by OESP. The Director of OESP informed the Executive Board that a system for closer tracking of follow-up to individual evaluations was being developed. The planned decentralization of the central evaluation database (CEDAB) to all UNDP country offices was welcomed, as was the intended use of the Internet as a tool for the dissemination of evaluation results and for networking among country offices and programme country authorities. The new "Guiding Principles for Monitoring and Evaluation" recommended that approval of individual projects and programmes should be contingent upon demonstration that CEDAB and other sources of evaluation findings had been reviewed for lessons that could be relevant to the planned activity. In the review of advisory notes by the Regional Bureaux and PMOC, increased attention was being paid to the absorption of lessons learned and the incorporation of appropriate mechanisms for programme monitoring and evaluation.

187. Many delegations supported the intention of UNDP to intensify its efforts to develop methodologies for the assessment of the human development impact that emanated from its projects and programmes. Several speakers emphasized the importance of harmonization of donor procedures, and, in that connection, welcomed the planned joint evaluation activities of UNDP with other United Nations agencies and with bilateral donor organizations. Efforts aimed at national evaluation capacity development in programme countries were welcomed and encouraged.

188. The Director of OESP thanked the speakers for their comments and suggestions. She assured them that OESP would support the Administrator in ensuring further improvements in the level of evaluation compliance and UNDP would improve its tracking of follow-up in evaluation exercises. She noted that evaluation was only one component of good management practice and that the effectiveness of the evaluation function was linked to many aspects of organizational culture and practice. The ultimate objective of evaluation was support to organizational effectiveness and programme quality rather than the conduct of evaluation for its own sake. The Office would seek to develop further its methodological approaches and guidance in order to ensure the highest level of professional conduct.

189. The President stated that the Executive Board had seen evidence of improvement in the UNDP evaluation function but that more work remained to be done.

190. The Executive Board took note of the Administrator's report on evaluation.

Change management

191. The Administrator, in introducing UNDP proposals for change management (DP/1997/16/Add.7), opened the session with a statement in which he underlined

that the purpose of change was to give full effect to the mandate and mission received from the Executive Board and not to introduce new policy directions. He provided a reflection of the broad features emerging from the consultative process with the Executive Board stressing that: (a) UNDP would capitalize on its operational role at the country level; (b) the new UNDP headquarters would organize itself to meet its mandate efficiently and effectively; (c) UNDP would institutionalize a corporate culture of greater efficiency, transparency and accountability; (d) recognizing that its own resources alone were insufficient to make a significant impact on poverty eradication, UNDP would seek to use its resource base to catalyse more funds for nationally defined sustainable human development (SHD) activities; (e) UNDP would enhance its programme focus within the SHD framework according to principles adopted by its Executive Board; and (f) the new UNDP would actively support and fit into the process of United Nations reform. The Administrator then highlighted a series of measures that had been, or would be, undertaken to prepare for the implementation phase, emphasizing the unique staff capacity throughout UNDP.

192. All delegations expressed their appreciation for a useful and transparent consultative process. Many stated that they supported, in principle, the change recommendations proposed. In particular, delegations approved of the direction of change in the areas of decentralization, delegation of authority to the country level, the simplification of rules and procedures, and enhanced efficiency and accountability. Several speakers commended the decision of the Administrator to keep the Evaluation Office as a separate office, reporting directly to him with links to programme activities. There was broad support for regular reporting on the implementation of change at future sessions. Some delegations requested a consolidated assessment of reform at the country level at the annual session 1998. Others requested further work on concrete benchmarks and targets to assist the Executive Board in monitoring progress. A more detailed accounting of the cost estimates for the change process was also requested.

193. Several delegations voiced their concern that non-core resource mobilization at the country level could undermine the multilateral role and mandate of UNDP. A few speakers stated that resource utilization was as important as resource mobilization, and in that regard underlined the importance of not distracting resident representatives from their primary task of ensuring programme delivery. A concise document for the third regular session 1997 explaining the policy framework that UNDP would adopt in promoting resource mobilization was requested. Some delegations stated the view that if resource mobilization became a major task at the country level, there could be a conflict of interest between resident representatives in their role as UNDP representatives and as resident coordinators.

194. A number of delegations requested assurance that UNDP change management efforts would be compatible with the broader proposals for United Nations reform, particularly with regard to the Track II proposals of the Secretary-General, and that UNDP be flexible in adjusting to those reforms, if needed. Two delegations suggested that, with respect to the change proposals on coordination, it might be advisable to wait for the Secretary-General's wider proposals before implementing those measures.

195. Almost all delegations welcomed the proposed phased approach to the subregional resource facilities, highlighting the need to utilize national experts and during the process to take into account lessons learned. One delegation expressed concern that the facilities would have managerial responsibilities; another requested further clarification on the running costs.

196. Delegations expressed their appreciation that the Staff Council was present at the Executive Board meeting and requested that dialogue between the Board and the Staff Council take place at subsequent Board meetings. It was noted that UNDP senior managers must accept and lead change and be held accountable for achieving defined results.

197. The conference room paper "Narrowing the focus: UNDP core development services" (DP/1997/CRP.18) was welcomed. Delegations stated that they looked forward to further discussion and dialogue with the secretariat on the concept of focus at the third regular session 1997.

198. Some delegations expressed concern over the lack of equity in staffing between the regional bureaux and requested an Executive Board decision to ensure equal levels of leadership in each bureau, in particular with regard to the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. It was noted that the vacant post of Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa should also be filled as soon as possible. Another delegation requested that any reduction in headquarters staff not apply to the Evaluation Office; a few members requested the same for the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. A revised version of document DP/1997/CRP.14 on the staffing of country offices was requested for the third regular session 1997, to include information on individual countries. Several delegations pointed out the need for new management and technical skills and training for staff at headquarters and at the country level. One speaker underlined the need for UNDP to pay due attention to the very important area of public relations in contributor countries.

199. There was general agreement that all management changes that fell within the prerogatives of the Administrator be implemented forthwith. Two delegations requested a document for discussion on the link between change and policy direction, which would include risks taken, financial information and the relationship with other funds and programmes.

200. In his response, the Administrator addressed those questions relating to the main discussion topics, including resource mobilization, coordination, staff morale, subregional resource facilities and the location and reporting of the Evaluation Office. He emphasized, in particular, that resource mobilization would be carried out within the established policy framework of UNDP and without any importuning of donors or any slackening of attention to core resources. He underlined that UNDP was not proposing policy changes that would affect its mandate. With respect to coordination, the Administrator stressed that UNDP proposals were entirely within the framework of existing legislation and would be pursued with due regard to the importance given by the General Assembly to UNDP stewardship of the resident coordinator function. He appreciated the participation of the Staff Council in the discussion.

201. The Team Leader of UNDP 2001 informed the Executive Board that the initial estimate for change was about $20 million. The budget presentation at the third regular session would show the allocations and shifting of priorities among various organizational units resulting from the change process.

202. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/15. Change management

The Executive Board

1. Recalls the existing legal framework of the United Nations Development Programme, including General Assembly resolution 2688 (XXV) of 10 December 1970;

2. Also recalls General Assembly resolutions 47/199 and 50/120 on the operational activities for development of the United Nations system and stresses the importance of their full implementation;

3. Commends the Administrator and United Nations Development Programme staff for the change management process and its overall direction, which aims to improve the level and quality of services and the strengthening of the overall impact on development of Programme activities through, inter alia, the decentralization of decision-making and responsibilities to the country level and enhanced accountability measures;

4. Recognizes that United Nations Development Programme change management shall be undertaken within the ongoing process of wider United Nations reform;

5. Stresses that national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities for development within the United Nations system, and that programmes should be based on such development plans and priorities, and should therefore be country-driven;

6. Also stresses in that context the need to take into account the outcomes and commitments of relevant United Nations conferences, as well as the individual mandates and complementarities of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system, bearing in mind the need to avoid duplication;

7. Further stresses the importance of financial, individual and performance accountability in the United Nations Development Programme and supports the efforts of the Administrator in this regard;

I. RESIDENT COORDINATOR SYSTEM

8. Welcomes measures taken by the United Nations Development Programme to improve its capacity to support the resident coordinator system, within the context of General Assembly resolutions 32/197, 44/211, 47/199 and 50/120, and

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requests the Programme to continue consultations with other funds and programmes on their respective roles and ownership in this regard;

II. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

9. Emphasizes the importance of core resources as the foundation of the United Nations Development Programme resource base;

10. Stresses that, in pursuing resource mobilization at the request of programme countries, United Nations Development Programme country offices should not compromise their primary role of programme delivery and that such resources raised be used for programmes in accordance with country priorities and be included under an approved country cooperation framework;

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION

11. Welcomes the decision to establish a separate Evaluation Unit, the head of which will report directly to the Administrator and also welcomes the clearer link being made between evaluation, lessons learned and programme enhancement;

IV. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

12. Recognizes the importance of the role that United Nations Development Programme staff must play in the change process and emphasizes that the implementation of the human resource development policy of the change management process should be in accordance with the existing provisions of the United Nations common system;

V. DECENTRALIZATION

13. Welcomes the proposals of the Administrator to strengthen the country focus and operations of the United Nations Development Programme;

14. Underlines the need for the change management process to take into account existing decisions and policies on capacity-building and national execution;

15. Supports the phased introduction of a small number of subregional resource facilities and requests the Administrator to report to the Executive Board at its annual session 2001 on an evaluation of the functions and impact of the facilities;

16. Requests the Administrator to provide an interim report, at the annual session 1998, through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, on the budget implications, human resources implications and efficiency gains occasioned by the phased introduction of subregional resource facilities;

17. Emphasizes that, while establishing the subregional resource facilities in phases, the United Nations Development Programme shall take fully into account the diversity of regional and subregional circumstances; the need

to ensure the involvement of national expertise available within the subregion; the need to avoid duplication of work undertaken by other subregional or regional institutions; and the demand-driven nature of these facilities;

18. Requests the Administrator, in the context of the presentation of the biennial budget, to report on the criteria for staffing country offices and to identify clearly any new and/or additional functions;

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

19. Urges the Administrator, and United Nations Development Programme staff at all levels, to implement change management while maintaining the primary focus of the Programme on programme delivery and quality at the country level;

20. Requests the Administrator to incorporate, in accordance with the existing legal framework of the United Nations Development Programme, the implementation of change management fully into budgetary and corporate planning and to report thereon to the Executive Board at the third regular session 1997 in the context of the biennial budget; and to provide at that session an updated implementation plan with further developed time-bound, and to the extent possible, quantifiable targets;

21. Further requests the Administrator to report to the Executive Board on the implementation of the present decision at each session;

22. Notes the proposal by the Administrator on the further focusing of United Nations Development Programme activities and core development services that are still subject to discussions by the Executive Board without losing momentum in the change management process and programme delivery and requests the Administrator to submit a report for discussions at the first regular session 1998.

VII. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

23. Requests the Administrator to include in the report to be presented in accordance with decision 96/44 at the first regular session of 1998 further analysis of the implications resulting from the change management process on the future policy direction of the United Nations Development Programme (inter alia, the role of the Programme in implementing programmes and projects, national execution and resource mobilization at the field level);

23 May 1997

IX. UNDP: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS

A. Africa

203. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation frameworks for Comoros (DP/CCF/COI/1); Lesotho (DP/CCF/LES/1); United Republic of Tanzania

(DP/CCF/URT/1); and Zambia (DP/CCF/ZAM/1) on a no-objection basis. In accordance with the written request from five members of the Executive Board, the Board discussed the first country cooperation framework for Sierra Leone (DP/CCF/SIL/1).

204. The Acting Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the CCF for Sierra Leone. The Resident Representative in Sierra Leone presented an overview of the consultative process leading up to the finalization of the CCF and outlined the main facets of UNDP cooperation in Sierra Leone. She noted the important role of humanitarian assistance, which had been linked to long-term development efforts, and the useful application of the programme approach. Other noteworthy aspects were the support of donors, the role of United Nations agencies, attention to gender equity, enhanced use of United Nations Volunteers specialists, and the strengthening of local systems.

205. Delegations stated that the CCF for Sierra Leone demonstrated the positive linkage of development and peace-building. Speakers supported the priorities of the CCF. Further information was sought on impact measurement and the participation of the Government of Sierra Leone in the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa.

206. The Resident Representative thanked the delegations for their comments. Sierra Leone was indeed active in the Special Initiative for Africa, she noted, in particular in the areas of education, governance and food security. She cited the close working relationship of UNDP with United Nations agencies in Sierra Leone. Greater efforts were being made in the area of measurement of impact, including through work with the Government on three national strategies. She encouraged Executive Board members to provide their expertise in that area. In response to a query raised, she noted that the United Nations Capital Development fund had been active in Sierra Leone for many years.

207. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Sierra Leone (DP/CCF/SIL/1), with the comments made thereon.

B. Asia and the Pacific

208. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for the Islamic Republic of Iran (DP/CCF/IRA/1).

209. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed his Government's gratitude to the management and personnel of UNDP for its assistance. The framework had been the result of a lengthy process. He cited the need for ensuring sustainability for the programmes in the framework and the need to fine-tune the outlined activities with specific projects. Some statistics in the framework were not accurate, according to the representative. He hoped that the core contributions to UNDP would increase, as the decrease was having a negative impact at the country level.

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C. Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

210. The President informed the Executive Board that five written requests had been received for consideration of the CCFs for Belarus and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

211. The Executive Board approved the country cooperation frameworks for Estonia (DP/CCF/EST/1) and Lithuania (DP/CCF/LIT/1) on a no-objection basis.

212. One speaker commented that in the view of his delegation a reference contained in paragraph 22 of document DP/CCF/EST/1 was incorrect.

213. The representative of Estonia, in thanking the Executive Board for the approval of the CCF for that country, expressed the view that UNDP should maintain its presence in Estonia through the year 2000. He thanked all donors, including UNDP, for their support to Estonia. His delegation wished to state its disagreement with the statement previously made by one delegation in questioning one of the references in the CCF.

First country cooperation framework for Belarus (DP/CCF/BLR/1)

214. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) introduced the first country cooperation framework for Belarus (DP/CCF/BLR/1), which had been requested by five delegations for discussion. The CCF for Belarus reflected the development dialogue, initiated in 1994, with important initiatives in human rights, in particular the Ombudsman institution, and innovative undertakings such as the conversion of military bases for civilian use. An initiative to expand Internet facilities in the country was also a major undertaking, reaching out to civil society in its project design with the positive support of the Government.

215. Several delegations, while expressing support for the themes and objectives of the CCF for Belarus, expressed their concern about the possibility of successfully implementing all components of the framework. In particular, some speakers had reservations about the likelihood that the human rights centre would function independently and impartially. One delegation noted that many of the activities outlined in the document would depend on Government commitment to reform. Another underlined the need to review the framework in the light of recent events in Belarus and encouraged UNDP to ensure collaboration with civil society and relevant international institutions in implementing the framework. Some delegations requested that the implementation of the CCF be carefully monitored and recommended that more information be provided by UNDP through an information note to be submitted at the annual session 1998.

216. While some delegations found the resource mobilization targets unrealistically high, several speakers, in support of the CCF, emphasized that the content of the CCF should be guided by substance and not resource mobilization potential. One delegation highlighted the possibility of interregional cooperation, particularly between the RBEC region and Latin America and the Caribbean.

217. Some speakers underlined the need for the deliberations of the Executive Board to be apolitical and concentrate only on matters within the mandate of UNDP and with reference to the needs of programme countries.

218. One delegation noted a seeming uniformity among CCFs which should be reviewed.

219. The First Deputy Minister of Economy of Belarus reaffirmed the role of the CCF as strengthening the ca[illegible]ty for self-development in his country. Implementation of projects [illegible]ld be closely monitored by the Government and by UNDP. A significant part [illegible] the CCF would be implemented by Belarus on its own and through mobilizing additional resources. He underlined the priority of his Government on governance, human rights and freedoms, which was why a human rights institution was being set up in Minsk with the assistance of UNDP and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. A European Union special representative was enabling dialogue between the Government and representatives of civil society. Progress had been seen in relations between Belarus and international financial institutions, which proved the willingness of his country to reform its economy further.

220. The Resident Representative for Belarus reiterated the understanding of UNDP that the Government of Belarus was fully supportive of the implementation of governance, democracy and participation and that both national and international non-governmental organizations as well as civil society at large would continue to be active partners in implementation. The United Nations Centre for Human Rights would be fully involved both in substantial issues and the funding of the human rights centre. He confirmed that quarterly implementation reports would be submitted to UNDP headquarters. He also confirmed that funding had been secured from the Soros Foundation and would be in direct support of civil society. Several donors had already expressed serious interest in supporting programmes within the CCF.

221. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Belarus, taking into account the comments made thereon, and requesting that an information note be submitted at the annual session 1998 on the implementation of the human rights component of the framework.

First country cooperation framework for Bosnia and Herzegovina (DP/CCF/BIH/1)

222. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States introduced the first country cooperation framework (CCF) for Bosnia and Herzegovina. He noted that the UNDP programme strategy outlined in the CCF focused available resources on three main areas: integrated multisectoral area-based development projects; area-targeted, sector-based projects; and policy and advisory support. He pointed out that apart from available UNDP resources, approximately $42.4 million in additional contributions had already been received from Japan, Italy, the United States, Spain and the European Union. He also explained that the UNDP programme had elicited local support and donor interest because it promoted multi-ethnic community focus and local ownership of the development process.

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223. Many delegations praised the high quality of the document, including its substance and presentation. They endorsed its strategic objectives, particularly as regarded working at the local community level to rebuild capacities, confidence and economic activities. One speaker encouraged UNDP to continue to be bold in the complex environment in the country and not to be afraid of making mistakes. Another pointed out that the comprehensive financial information provided in the document should be used as an example for other CCFs.

224. Other delegations sought clarification about the comparative advantage of UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina and underscored the need to work in coordination with other donors. In particular, queries were raised about the collaboration of UNDP with the World Bank. One speaker asked how UNDP would square its sustainable human development objectives with the necessity to reform the country's economy through structural adjustments and other similar prescriptions. One delegation expressed concern with the programme's ambition and another the need to work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

225. The representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina praised and thanked UNDP for establishing an office in 1996 as it signalled the overall interest of the international community in her country and a return to relative normalcy. She also highlighted the enormous physical and human toll the conflict had inflicted and the enormous amount of resources that were required to rebuild it. She underscored her country's determination to carry out economic reforms with the support of the international communities and UNDP in particular. The representative thanked UNDP, the European Union, and the Governments of Austria and Italy for their valuable financial support to activities in a variety of social and economic areas. The representative praised Japan for its generous overall funding commitment of $130 million, of which $30 million was channelled through UNDP.

226. The Resident Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in response to the various queries and comments, emphasized the excellent strategic cooperation between UNDP and the World Bank. As concrete examples, he cited the rapid mobilization of UNDP-funded damage assessments, which had enabled large capital investment projects in the health and education sectors to proceed as well as other complementary initiatives such as the establishment of aid coordination and debt management units in Republica Srpska. Those activities were also described as examples of the comparative advantage of UNDP. In an environment where many donors concentrated their support on physical reconstruction, UNDP provided valuable complementary expertise which rebuilt capacity as well as the social fabric. Gorni Vakuf was cited as a case in point of a locality that had overcome its interethnic rivalry with the help of the UNDP presence and approach. He underscored that UNDP had supported economic transition in the country by providing it with alternative expertise. UNDP was committed to working with NGOs in the country. He clarified that the cost-sharing referred to in the document had been approved by Italy, Japan, Spain, the United States, and the European Union. He thanked the delegations for their positive remarks and expressed his willingness to face the enormous challenges awaiting UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

227. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Bosnia and Herzegovina (DP/CCF/BIH/1).

D. Arab States

228. The Executive Board approved the country cooperation frameworks for Morocco (DP/CCF/MOR/1) and Tunisia (DP/CCF/TUN/1) on a no-objection basis.

229. The representative of Morocco stated that the CCF for his country would allow reform to be carried out. He wished to pay tribute to the Regional Bureau for Arab States for the development of the CCF. The new programming procedures would strengthen the use of the programme approach. However, he wished to underline the need for the prior consent of the Government for all activities as well as the need to implement sound management guidelines.

230. In accordance with the written request from five members of the Executive Board members, the Board discussed the first country cooperation framework for Lebanon (DP/CCF/LEB/1). The Assistant Administrator and Director for the Regional Bureau for Arab States presented the country cooperation framework for Lebanon, citing the country's post-conflict recovery since 1990 and its relatively high growth rate in gross domestic product. The framework included activities in development of the country's social sectors, including health and employment generation. The Government would receive support in rehabilitation, trade, decentralization, and statistics.

231. One delegation took the floor to commend the framework for Lebanon. The targets cited in the annex were realistic and coordination with donors was excellent. The representative noted that the three areas of intervention in the CCF seemed broad. Clarification about continued support to promotion of tourism was requested. In general, more information on the use of the scant resources for Lebanon was requested. More information was also requested on the project regarding municipalities. Appreciation for the interventions in poverty eradication was noted. The programme had close links with that of UNFPA, and in that regard, the two could have been considered together by the Executive Board. The speaker requested further information on the second phase of the project in Baalbeck-Hermel. Her delegation supported the inclusion of support to small and medium enterprises in the project. The comments of the French-speaking community could have been taken into account in the formation of the CCF, including through drafting the original version in French.

232. The President agreed that the UNDP country cooperation framework and the UNFPA country programme for Lebanon could have been considered together.

233. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States thanked the delegation for its comments. He noted that the interest of the Government of Lebanon in tourism development was well known. A range of activities in the CCF would support tourism directly or indirectly. As an example, activities envisaged under the broad area of environment protection were an important, indirect support to tourism development policies. The Baalbeck-Hermel project was now in its second phase and was no longer centred exclusively on agriculture. The Assistant Administrator cited new areas such as micro-credit schemes, support to small enterprises, employment, and training.

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The comments of donors would be sought about the development of public administration.

234. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Lebanon (DP/CCF/LEB/1), with the comments made thereon.

235. The representative of Lebanon expressed his Government's deep appreciation for the country cooperation framework, as well as to the Executive Board and the Government of France for their support. The CCF was linked with the themes of the "Year 2000 for Reconstruction of Lebanon" and focused on the poorest sectors of Lebanon. In that regard, the follow-up to the outcomes of recent international conferences was very important. National efforts and cooperation with donors would give impetus to the programmes. Common premises were being constructed in Lebanon.

X. UNDP: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAMME

236. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Resources and External Affairs introduced the item, which was being taken up in response to Executive Board decision 96/22. The Director of the Division of Public Affairs introduced the report on the UNDP information and publication policy (DP/1997/17) and gave an overview of progress achieved in the main areas of the UNDP communication and advocacy strategy.

237. Adopted in July 1995, the strategy aimed to raise public awareness of UNDP activities within the larger framework of the United Nations role in development. The Director stated that the message was articulated at two levels: through the 132 country offices of UNDP and around the intellectual leadership provided by UNDP senior management on the subject of sustainable and people-centred development.

238. The Director pointed out steps taken to improve the public information capacities of country offices: to extend outreach to media; and to strengthen advocacy and build partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), parliamentarians and other decision-makers. He described the work of UNDP work with regard to publications, electronic communication and linguistic balances. He also called attention to the need for adequate resources for public affairs work, noting that Change Management Team 7 on information and communication had also advocated increased resources.

239. Four 30-second public service announcements (PSAs) on UNDP were shown to the Executive Board.

240. Delegations expressed appreciation for the paper, as well as for the PSAs, and praised the significant progress made in UNDP communications and information in recent years.

241. Several speakers voiced reservations concerning the objectives of the strategy outlined in document DP/1997/17, including with regard to the content of UNDP publications. It was generally felt that public information activities

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should be based on clear objectives and that there could be more clarity in the messages disseminated by UNDP.

242. Several delegations queried whether the communication and information programme had been subject to any monitoring or evaluation, a necessary element in determining impact on target audiences. Evaluation of work in the information field should also be ongoing, in the same way as for the overall activities of UNDP in development.

243. Delegations also cited the links between public information and resource mobilization. Publications offered a direct method of influencing decision makers in donor countries, as well as NGOs from those countries based in the developing world. Short, focused publications, tailor-made for parliamentarians and others who had little time to read were needed and could serve as tools for decision-makers. UNDP should review and analyse its publications with that in mind since some were not sufficiently targeted. Clarity, simplicity and brevity were needed, with quantity a less important factor than quality.

244. One delegation requested information on the cost of producing and distributing publications.

245. While one delegation said that large campaigns were not needed, another felt that the UNDP information programme also needed to reach the general public to gain broad support. Some delegations felt the need for a comprehensive illustrated annual report.

246. Several Nordic delegations praised the effectiveness of the work of the Nordic Liaison Office, expressing appreciation for its assistance. They also noted that the Office should be strengthened. One delegation said that she had also received positive feedback from government officials, praising the effectiveness of UNDP country offices in providing information.

247. With regard to linguistic balances, delegations spoke out for language versions of publications, including for electronic publications.

248. Questions were raised about the country-level public information activities of UNDP, including how the Public Affairs Officers were trained, how their activities were budgeted, and the basis upon which national communication and advocacy strategies were prepared.

249. In replying to the comments, the Director of Public Affairs referred Executive Board members to several sections of the UNDP Communication and Advocacy Strategy, which was distributed at the session. The strategy stated that different approaches were needed for different countries. He welcomed consultation with Board members to discuss further and develop the information and communication policy.

250. Delegations expressed appreciation for the strategy, regretting that they had not received it earlier, as it answered a number of their questions.

251. The Assistant Administrator thanked delegations for their comments, stating that while good progress had been made, there was still more to do. It

was not easy to establish an effective communication and information programme for UNDP and the impact of information was hard to measure. He agreed that an integrated approach to resource mobilization was needed.

252. The Director also stated that UNDP had to target its limited resources carefully for maximum impact, and had therefore been trying to use existing infrastructure and staff for its information work. He recognized the good work of the Liaison Offices, including the Nordic Liaison Office, which he agreed needed more resources.

253. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/17. UNDP communication and information policy

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Administrator on the implementation and strengthening of the United Nations Development Programme communication and information policy and the comments made thereon;

2. Welcomes the process initiated by the United Nations Development Programme in response to decision 96/22 leading to an improved strategy for communication and information policy and in this regard, recognizes the changes that have taken place since 1995 in creating better visibility and awareness for the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations system in the media and in the area of advocacy;

3. Stresses that such a strategy must be applied throughout the United Nations Development Programme and that its application should be duly monitored;

4. Emphasizes that more targeted, accurate, clear and frank public information is necessary to generate support for increased resources for the United Nations Development Programme;

5. Stresses that strategic targeting of the communication and information activities are essential to make the most effective use of resources available;

6. Also stresses the importance of maintaining linguistic balance in the electronic dissemination of information;

7. Welcomes the proposals for monitoring and evaluation which are integral and important parts of information and communication activities and need to be strengthened, taking into account the difficulty, methodologically and operationally, of measuring the impact or effectiveness of such activities;

8. Urges the Administrator to improve the focus and quality of public information on the impact of United Nations Development Programme activities at the country level and to develop new types of statistics and publications to this end, including indicators of impact;

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9. Requests the Administrator to ensure that the efforts taken by the United Nations Development Programme in this regard are closely coordinated with those of the United Nations system, with a view to strengthening coherence and consistency in its communication;

10. Also requests the Administrator to submit a report at the annual session 1998 on progress in developing and implementing the communication and information policy of the United Nations Development Programme with particular reference to the implementation of the relevant change management recommendations, including budgetary implications.

23 May 1997

XI. UNDP: UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

254. The Director presented the Strategy and Business Plan of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) (DP/1997/18), underlining that the plan was a living document and contained guidelines for action that would be reviewed annually and modified when necessary. She thanked the Executive Board for its support, comments, questions and recommendations in developing the Business Plan.

255. The Director noted that the Strategy and Business Plan captured a strategic shift for UNIFEM as it moved to the year 2000. The shift was based on an effort to focus UNIFEM programming, emphasizing three areas of concern: strengthening women's economic capacity; promoting the realization of women's human rights and the elimination of violence against women; and engendering governance and leadership. She emphasized that the thematic areas would be addressed in relation to regional and country realities. The Director also noted that in the new phase, UNIFEM would be working on the following goals: incorporation of the principles of a learning organization; improvement of its communication, information and tracking systems; and making small but strategic investments and leveraging external resources through collaborative action.

256. The Director provided clarification on three frequently asked questions about UNIFEM and its work, including what UNIFEM meant by piloting projects, issues relating to the role of UNIFEM in gender mainstreaming, and how the Fund served as a catalyst within the United Nations system. She also outlined the work of UNIFEM within the resident coordinator system at the country level. The Director explained that UNIFEM would pilot new approaches and initiatives in order to test areas of emerging importance, develop seed projects that could be upscaled, and create opportunities to develop new methods and tools.

257. In speaking about gender mainstreaming, the Director defined the meaning of mainstreaming for UNIFEM and outlined some of its activities in mainstreaming gender. She outlined the ways in which UNIFEM was collaborating with the various parts of the United Nations system. The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, for example, was involved in policy and norm-setting work; the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women was focusing on research and training regarding women in

development; the gender focal points were providing advice and guidance on engendering programmes and policies within their agencies; and UNIFEM was working at an operational level to bring the lessons learned at the country level back into the United Nations system.

258. The Director outlined the UNIFEM mandate to support the resident coordinator system, which was based on the report of the Secretary General on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. She stated that UNIFEM support to the resident coordinator system was a means of linking women's empowerment and mainstreaming at the country level to the United Nations system. Specifically, UNIFEM would be involved in building a common database, in engendering common country assessments, and in engendering the proposed United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

259. Delegations thanked the Director for her presentation, noting that it had helped to enhance their understanding of UNIFEM and its work. Speakers commented that they were pleased to review the Strategy and Business Plan and were encouraged by the progress UNIFEM had made in strengthening itself as an organization and in prioritizing and focusing its work. The Executive Board also welcomed the idea of the Strategy and Business Plan as a living document on which UNIFEM could build.

260. Many delegations expressed their support for the Strategy and Business Plan. Many commented on the thematic focus of UNIFEM activities and the strategies through which UNIFEM proposed to undertake its work. While the majority of speakers noted that the Strategy and Business Plan provided a more strategic and sharper focus to UNIFEM work and its role in the United Nations system, two delegations suggested that the three-year work plan could be further refined and made more strategic, with clarification of the Fund's role as a catalyst. Many delegations welcomed the development of UNIFEM as a learning organization and endorsed the establishment of UNIFEM as a centre of expertise. Many speakers favoured increased funding to UNIFEM in order to ensure that it would be able to achieve the objectives outlined in the Strategy and Business Plan. One delegation highlighted the increased donor confidence in UNIFEM and in its new leadership, and suggested that more resources would be likely to come from its Government. Another delegation announced its intention to double its contribution to UNIFEM.

261. Queries were raised about the criteria according to which UNIFEM would select the countries in which it worked. The Executive Board stressed the need to balance the potential impact of UNIFEM involvement in a country with the need for work on gender equality within certain countries. The Board also emphasized the need to maintain balance between the operational work of UNIFEM at the country level and its work within the United Nations system. Some delegations expressed concern about the desired funding increase presented in the Strategy and Business Plan, asking whether the level of resource mobilization required was realistic. Suggestions were made that UNIFEM work to increase its funding from the private sector. Enhanced cooperation with the Bretton Wood institutions was encouraged. One delegation requested a list of contributors to UNIFEM with an indication of those who would increase their contributions. Queries were also raised about the ability of UNIFEM to support the resident coordinator system, given its limited number of Regional Programme Advisors.

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The Fund was encouraged to collaborate with other United Nations organizations in its country-level work in an effort to mainstream gender issues.

262. The Director responded to the questions of the Executive Board by grouping them along similar themes. She commented that the Strategy and Business Plan outlined optimal and status-quo scenarios for funding in which even in the status-quo scenario (i.e., no funding increase) UNIFEM would still have a strong programme for women's empowerment. She spoke about how UNIFEM has undertaken a vigorous resource mobilization strategy. She indicated that between 1995 and 1997, 13 countries had become new donors to UNIFEM and 16 countries had increased their contribution. The Director also indicated that UNIFEM has established a resource mobilization team which was working to increase donations from the private sector, national committees, and international foundations.

263. The Director thanked the Executive Board for its emphasis on considering need in addition to potential impact in the selection of UNIFEM activities. The Director noted that UNIFEM recognized the need to maintain a balance between high impact and the needs of women when designing its programmes. The Director then reported on two Regional Strategic Planning Workshops that had been held in the Asia and Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions. She noted that those regional meetings had included the participation of UNIFEM Regional Programme Advisors (RPAs) in reviewing the Strategy and Business Plan from a regional perspective. She remarked that the RPAs would develop regional work plans that would build on the Business Plan, thereby placing UNIFEM activities within the regional context.

264. The Deputy Director addressed queries related to monitoring, which she noted was carried out by UNIFEM RPAs in coordination with headquarters staff. She noted that UNIFEM would be working on developing a results-based methodology which will include indicators for use in project monitoring.

265. With regard to UNIFEM thematic areas, the Director remarked that in terms of its work on economic empowerment, UNIFEM was working to ensure that women could take advantage of the opportunities presented by globalization, rather than being involved in specific job creation schemes which involved more time and financial support. She emphasized that UNIFEM was not interested in free-standing, isolated projects but rather in projects that would add to a continuum of change. She also noted that UNIFEM would continue to build on its political empowerment work. In both areas, UNIFEM would continue to build partnerships within the United Nations system in order to conduct its work effectively and efficiently.

266. The President noted, in response to a query raised, that the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women had been invited to participate in the discussion of the UNIFEM Strategy and Business Plan. However, both she and her Deputy were scheduled to be on mission during the day of the discussion and regretted that they could not be present. One delegation asked that Ms. King, in her capacity as special advisor to the Secretary-General on gender mainstreaming and the advancement of women, could give a presentation to the Executive Board in the near future.

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267. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/18. United Nations Development Fund for Women

The Executive Board

1. Endorses the Strategy and Business Plan of the United Nations Development Fund for Women contained in document DP/1997/18, taking into account the comments made at the Board;

2. Emphasizes that the implementation of the activities of the Strategy and Business Plan should be guided by the mandate of the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

3. Requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to support innovative and experimental activities in implementing the Strategy and Business Plan within the context of commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action;

4. Also requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to develop further and strengthen its role as a catalyst with a view to strengthening the gender perspective of development programmes in recipient countries and increasing synergy with other United Nations organizations;

5. Further requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to focus on strategic interventions and building upon its comparative advantages, in order to promote systemic change, in particular with regard to political and economic empowerment;

6. Reaffirms the role of the United Nations Development Fund for Women in linking technical expertise with policy formulation in the process of gender mainstreaming throughout the resident coordinator system;

7. Requests the United Nations Development Fund for Women to maintain a balance between potential impact and the needs of women in the application of the criteria for programme selection;

8. Encourages the United Nations Development Fund for Women to mobilize resources for its future activities from all available sources, including the private sector, and urges all Member States to contribute and to consider increasing their contributions to the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

9. Decides that the United Nations Development Fund for Women should report to the Executive Board orally in 1998 and in writing every alternate year and that the progress made by the Fund in implementing its Strategy and Business Plan should be contained in the annual report of the Administrator of UNDP.

23 May 1997

XII. UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

268. The Administrator introduced the report on the accountability system of UNDP (DP/1997/CRP.13). The report outlined the steps taken in UNDP to create a strong culture of accountability, both for programme impact and for the optimum use of financial and human resources. The conference room paper gave an update of the elaboration and implementation of the accountability framework within UNDP, including its relevance to the UNDP 2001 change process, as well as an overview of how UNDP would align the systems and sub-systems of the accountability framework with one another and with UNDP 2001. He reviewed the components of the accountability framework as contained in document DP/1996/35. He noted that in the proposed new structure in UNDP, the Bureau for Planning and Resource Management would unite organizational planning with budgeting and resource allocation. A system of internal oversight committees was now in place. The accountability system would facilitate the proposed reforms and improvements of UNDP 2001.

269. The other main areas covered by the framework were shared values, as presented in the statement of values and the United Nations code of conduct, which were in an advanced draft stage. Those drafts were provided to the Executive Board. Competencies, or the specific skills, attitudes and behaviours that characterized outstanding performance, enabled UNDP to produce results. At the individual level, expected behaviours would be included in individual performance plans and subjected to assessment. The components of the accountability framework would improve UNDP efforts to strengthen accountability to the Executive Board, to monitor and continuously improve programme and management performance and to transform itself into a learning organization. Monitoring and learning had three dimensions: assurance, corrective action, and reward and sanction. The Division for Audit and Management Review was entrusted with the responsibility for oversight of the UNDP accountability system. The effectiveness of the system depended on its ability to take corrective action once discrepancies in performance or conduct had been uncovered. Through their oversight functions, the Programme Management Oversight Committee and the Management Review and Oversight Committee could set in motion the processes necessary for corrective actions to take place.

270. Comprehensive measures would be taken in the near future to implement the UNDP 2001 change process, which would include the elaboration of an action plan to implement the new UNDP accountability framework.

271. One delegation requested further information on the finalization of the Financial Information Management System (FIMS), on the accountability of managers of trust funds in relation to the monitoring of individual performance as cited in the conference room paper, and on the criteria UNDP would use to promote staff members in the future. The delegation also requested a demonstration of the FIMS.

272. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration, in response, informed the delegation that information on FIMS would be provided bilaterally. Accountability standards for trust fund managers were the same as those for other staff. He noted that there would be a good

system in place for determining promotions, one which brought all previous elements together within the accountability framework.

Country office staff allocation

273. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration introduced the document on information on country office staff allocation (DP/1997/CRP.14), which had been requested by the Executive Board at the second regular session 1997. In introducing the paper, he emphasized that the information provided did not reflect what the Administrator would propose as allocations for the 1998-1999 biennium, as UNDP was still in the process of developing those proposals. He said the current document therefore highlighted the issues and criteria that had been taken into account in the past, which he believed would continue to play a role in the future.

274. The Assistant Administrator noted that the allocation of staff resources was not an exact science. The document listed a number of factors that had to be taken into account in reviewing the current allocation of staff resources. In addition he mentioned that the amount of resources that were being programmed and managed by a country office, combined with the policy to preserve the capacity of the UNDP country office network as a whole, were the main criteria that had been taken into account.

275. Delegations thanked the Assistant Administrator for the report, which provided interesting and valuable information.

276. One delegation referred to the need to achieve a fair distribution of staff for least developed countries (LDCs). The table in the conference room paper did not show that staff allocation followed the level of the target for resource assignments from the core (TRAC). He stated that while 60 per cent of TRAC resources were allocated to LDCs, only 47 per cent of the staff was allocated to those countries. In looking at all low-income countries, he noted that they had only 66 per cent of the staff while they accounted for 87 per cent of the TRAC resources.

277. The same delegation expressed an understanding for the link between allocation of staff resources and the need to maintain a global country office network, in particular in a period of declining core resources. In that connection, he expressed concern with the increasing amounts of core resources being used to fund an administrative network, rather than for programme purposes. UNDP thus should consider expanding the concept of multi-country offices currently followed in covering some programme countries in the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Regarding the criterion of staff resources being allocated on the ability of offices to raise extrabudgetary funds, he was concerned that the overheads earned from those additional funds did not cover their full costs. The Executive Board should be informed of the rules governing overhead costs.

278. Another speaker, while thanking the Administrator for the document, indicated that his delegation did not agree with the allocation criteria. While appreciating the fact that the allocation of staff resources was not an exact science, the delegation felt that the criteria should not be fluid and

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fluctuating. Her delegation, she said, was not fully in agreement with the criteria provided. She stated that the allocation of staff resources should be a clear-cut strategy with objective rules. Her delegation wanted more work to be done, such as priority for LDCs, stating that criteria should not be applied mechanically.

279. One delegation requested confirmation that the same subject would be covered in the context of the Administrator's 1998-1999 biennial budget proposals to be presented at the third regular session 1997. The President informed the delegation that the subject would indeed be covered at that time.

280. The Assistant Administrator appreciated the comments of the delegations. He underlined the role of UNDP with its multitude of functions, and noted the recognition by the Board that 29 per cent of a country office's workload was in support of United Nations operational activities. The Executive Board would continue to be fully involved in and fully informed of the allocation of staff resources in country offices in the context of biennial budget proposals. The organization had to respond to increasing demands in a period of decreasing resources, which no doubt had made an impact in the ability to staff adequately some of the new country offices covered by RBEC. Furthermore, the Administrator in the last three bienniums had voluntarily reduced the administrative budget so as to release more resources for programme purposes.

281. The Executive Board took note of the report on country office staff allocations (DP/1997/CRP.9) and the comments made thereon.

XIII. UNDP: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Report of the Executive Director

282. The Executive Director introduced his first regular annual report (DP/1997/19 and DP/1997/19/Add.1) on the activities of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in 1996. Noting that the report was based on the UNOPS business plan, which had been provided to the Board at its third regular session 1996, he reported that the long-term viability of UNOPS now appeared to be established, based on the solid performance of two years and the strong demand for services in the first part of 1997. Progress on staff management and personnel issues was reviewed, as well as the continued implementation of the UNOPS decentralization strategy, also based on the self-financing principle. The Executive Director also distributed an update of the statistical annex, to be made available officially as document DP/1997/19/Add.1/Rev.1, and the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 1996. The Executive Director also took the occasion to release the 1996 UNOPS annual report, which had been recently completed.

283. Twelve delegations took the floor to comment, each of which expressed satisfaction for the UNOPS performance relative to its projections, with one delegation noting the efficient combination of an enterprising corporate approach with the United Nations mandate to assist developing countries.

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Delegations also expressed their satisfaction at the clarity and transparency of the report of the Executive Director.

284. Several delegations requested that in its next report UNOPS complement its quantitative performance assessment with a review of its qualitative performance, with some delegations suggesting that it also be linked with the objectives stated in the annual business plans. One delegation expressed concern with implementation of a national project, requesting that ways be found to expedite project implementation.

Executive Director response

285. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their congratulations and encouragement, recalling that the UNOPS success would not have been possible without the efforts of the entire UNOPS team, including members of the Staff-Management Forum and staff in New York and the UNOPS outposts.

286. Responding to interest expressed by several delegations, the Executive Director distributed copies of the recently concluded Memorandum of Understanding between UNDP and UNOPS. He noted that the umbrella agreement would be followed by agreements on internal audit services and on central administrative services, both of which would be based on principles of value for money.

287. He welcomed the request of the Executive Board to provide additional information on qualitative performance, noting that the 1997 business plan would be made available at the third regular session in September. He also mentioned the progress UNOPS was making in developing materials to clarify its role and services for developing countries, further noting the recent establishment of the UNOPS web page.

288. With regard to questions concerning UNOPS policies for achieving fairness in contracting for women, nationals of developing countries, and underutilized major donors, the Executive Director clarified that the key element of UNOPS contracting was to obtain for its clients the best expertise and value available, at the best price. Nonetheless, he noted that preference was given to those groups when there was equivalence among potential contractors and consultants, adding that UNOPS was able to be more proactive with regard to staff paid from its own budget.

289. In response to a question regarding the cost to UNOPS of using calculated fee rates versus flat rates, the Executive Director confirmed that flat rates would be cheaper and easier for UNOPS to administer, but added that the transparency afforded clients by basing fees on the work to be performed was considered by UNOPS to be an advantage to the clients and therefore appropriate for a service organization.

290. The Executive Director anticipated that moderate growth was expected for the next biennium and that it would be reflected in the 1998-1999 budget to be submitted at the third regular session. He added that UNOPS would be ready to respond to stronger growth in demand than would be projected in the budget. With regard to growth in business carried out on behalf of Governments, he

explained that it was in significant measure due to the choice of Governments to use UNOPS services for projects funded from their own resources.

291. Finally, acknowledging the concern expressed by one delegation regarding a UNOPS project in that country, the Executive Director stated that he considered the concern to be a useful form of client feedback, to which UNOPS would respond, mentioning that an evaluation of that project was already scheduled to begin in the following week.

292. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Executive Director (DP/1997/19 and DP/1997/19/Add.1/Rev.1).

XIV. OTHER MATTERS

A. Emergency Assistance for the Democratic Republic of Congo

293. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/19. Assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Executive Board

1. Recognizes the important work of the United Nations Development Programme in emergency assistance, including prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and the supportive contributions of the United Nations Population Fund in this work;

2. Encourages the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to continue to monitor the implications for special assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

3. Also encourages the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund to be alert to the need for inter-agency assistance activities to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

4. Requests the Administrator and the Executive Director to report at the third regular session 1997 on activities undertaken.

23 May 1997

B. WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health

294. The Executive Board also took up consideration of conference room paper DP/FPA/1997/CRP. 5 on the draft terms of reference for the new WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH). The draft terms of reference had been drafted and agreed upon by the secretariats of the three organizations involved and had been approved by the WHO Executive Board earlier in the same week. One delegation asked if the representatives from the five regional groups on the Executive Board had been selected. The secretariat informed the Board that the

nominations of the representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, the Netherlands and the Russian Federation had been forwarded to the Board but that nominations from Thailand and Zambia had not yet been received. Another delegation, seconded by another, asked whether it would not be appropriate for the meetings of the CCH to take place in alternate years in Geneva and New York, not just in Geneva as specified in the draft terms of reference, given that the secretariats of UNICEF and UNFPA were located in New York. In light of the fact that some nominations had not been received, that the Board had not had time to review the terms of reference and that no meeting was scheduled to take place until the end of the year at the earliest, it was decided by the Board to reconsider the terms of reference at the third regular session 1997 of the Board.

C. Core allocations to 20/20

295. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support introduced the report on core allocations to 20/20 (DP/1997/CRP.19). He noted that UNDP had been associated with the 20/20 concept since its inception and also that it had been referred to in the Human Development Report. The impetus to implement 20/20 continued to grow through recognition of the concept at international forums and through the activities of a Working Group comprised of international organizations and Governments. The paper submitted to the Executive Board explained the role of UNDP, elaborated on work under way and gave plans for the future. One action that had been taken was the improvement of the internal accountability system in terms of programme category. A more in-depth report on the apportionment of resources by UNDP to fulfilling the 20/20 concept would be presented at the third regular session 1997. He noted that the 20/20 concept was included in some country cooperation frameworks. Government contributions to UNDP had facilitated the implementation of the 20/20 concept.

296. The Director of the Technical and Evaluation Division of UNFPA introduced conference room paper DP/FPA/1997/CRP.3 entitled "UNFPA's Contribution to the 20/20 Initiative". He reiterated that the Fund considered the 20/20 initiative to be very important and that it continued to participate wholeheartedly in the efforts of the United Nations system as a whole to support basic social services for all, including chairing the inter-agency task force on that effort. As was detailed in the conference room paper, all of the Fund's programme activities could be said to fall within the scope of the 20/20 initiative, specifically in the areas of population and reproductive health. Therefore, once administrative costs were subtracted, it was estimated that approximately 83 per cent of all the Fund's expenditures over the last four years had been spent on helping to provide basic social services in developing countries. He informed the Executive Board that UNFPA had taken on as a special project the collection of data on the flows of financial resources, both in terms of domestic resources and international assistance, for population and reproductive health programmes.

297. Several delegations expressed their appreciation for the presentations and the conference room papers of UNDP and UNFPA, which had been requested at the second regular session 1997. The serious effort of both organizations to implement the concept was appreciated. It was noted that UNDP was having difficulty in measuring the amount of its resources devoted to 20/20. It was hoped that further refinement of the concept would allow for a better

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determination of the subjects that could be included in 20/20. Increased collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions and other United Nations organizations was encouraged. Further information on the progress of the UNDP Poverty Strategies Initiative was requested. The representative of Norway informed the Executive Board of plans to have a follow-up meeting, to be held in a developing country, to review the 20/20 concept two years after its inception.

298. One delegation noted that the 20/20 concept was a useful tool for addressing social issues in programme countries. The work of UNDP was welcomed, including with regard to social problems linked with structural adjustment programmes. The speaker pointed out that programme countries with debt obligations often had limited resources left for spending on social programmes.

299. The Assistant Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its comments. He cited the cooperation of UNDP with UNICEF and the World Bank in connection with the 20/20 concept. UNDP was working with the World Bank on utilizing new information technologies to assist programme countries. In that regard, a major conference on communications technologies would be convened in Canada in June 1997. Overcoming the problems posed by debt burdens of developing countries was indeed a key hurdle in implementation of the concept.

300. Following the discussion by the Executive Board, the Director commented on three points that had been made by delegations. In response to the request made by one delegation, and supported by another, he informed the Board that UNFPA was already working with UNICEF on country case studies. In response to another intervention, he said that he felt that the common country assessment would be a suitable place to carry out analyses of 20/20 expenditures. Finally, in commenting on the necessity of working with the Bretton Woods institutions, he was pleased to report that the Fund had been in close contact with the World Bank on ways to strengthen their collaboration in supporting population and reproductive health programmes in developing countries.

301. One delegation requested that the discussion of the item be continued at the third regular session 1997 in order to prepare for the follow-up meeting on 20/20 and to discuss the outcome of the special event on poverty eradication organized by UNDP during the present session.

302. The President stated that the proposals would be discussed in the Bureau.

303. The Executive Board took note of the reports of the Administrator and of the Executive Director on core allocations to 20/20 (DP/1997/CRP.19 and DP/FPA/1997/CRP.3).

D. UNAIDS

304. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) of UNDP informed the Executive Board that UNDP had prepared an information paper on UNDP support for and collaboration with the joint and co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which was being made available to the Board. He noted the significant progress that had taken place in the first full year of operations with UNAIDS and the commitment of UNDP to work with UNAIDS and the other co-sponsoring organizations.

Particular note was taken of the speed with which United Nations theme groups on HIV/AIDS had been set up at the country level within the context of the United Nations resident coordinator system. Significant efforts had been made and would continue to be made by UNDP to support UNAIDS country programme advisors (CPAs) by providing essential administrative and other support in cash and in kind. On average, eight per cent of UNDP staff time at country level, during 1996, had been allocated in support of UNAIDS and HIV-related activities. That amount included the contributions in 20 country offices of UNDP HIV focal points, who served also as UNAIDS focal points. During 1996, financial support for UNDP-supported, HIV-related activities, including cost-sharing from the World Bank and other donors, totalled an estimated $65-70 million, of which the majority was allocated at the country level and the remainder at the regional and global levels. He outlined several specific activities undertaken in programme countries and noted the plans for meetings and workshops on the subject. In follow-up to an external evaluation of its regional activities in the area of HIV and Development in Africa, UNDP had organized a consensus-building workshop in Dakar in April 1997. The workshop had drawn wide participation and concluded that the regional activities had made a significant contribution. UNDP had also participated in collaborative programme reviews and development and training activities with bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations. A pilot effort in Malawi and Zimbabwe was under way, in which people living with HIV/AIDS would serve as national United Nations volunteers. Additional UNDP activities involved the areas of inter-agency collaboration on performance monitoring, training for managers and personnel staff, information dissemination, and publications. Future work would build on collaborative programme development with UNDP partners. He cited some difficulties on resource allocation, owing to the differing budget structures among the co-sponsors. In UNDP, $2-3 million had been allocated to support HIV/AIDS activities at the global level and for pilot testing at the country level. Between $5-10 million was allocated for regional-level activities.

305. The Chief of the Reproductive Health Branch of the Technical and Evaluation Division of UNFPA provided the Executive Board with a brief summation of the efforts that UNFPA had been making to include HIV/AIDS prevention activities in its programmes. These had begun in 1987, when the Fund had issued its first policy guidelines on HIV/AIDS. In the succeeding 10 years, UNFPA had expanded its support in four main areas: supply and distribution of condoms; training on HIV/AIDS for reproductive health information and service providers; in- and out-of-school HIV/AIDS education; and HIV/AIDS information as a part of broader reproductive health information, education and communication (IEC) programmes.

306. The Chief of the Reproductive Health Branch drew the attention of the Executive Board to the 1996 edition of the Fund's *AIDS Update* and pointed out some of the highlights of activities that had been undertaken in 1996, including participation in theme group mechanisms set up by UNAIDS at the country level, with a number of the groups being chaired by the UNFPA Representative. He informed the Board that UNFPA had provided support for HIV/AIDS prevention activities in 124 countries in 1996, compared to 41 in 1991, and had provided about $20.5 million for such activities in 1996. The Fund had collaborated with 115 NGOs and had provided $4.1 million worth of condoms to 62 countries in 1996.

307. At the global level, UNFPA had strengthened its collaboration with UNAIDS as one of the co-sponsoring organizations and had seconded a staff member to UNAIDS for the previous two years and was continuing the arrangement for the following two years. The Fund had recently approved a project that would be cost-shared with UNAIDS to develop approaches on how HIV/AIDS prevention and management activities could be integrated into reproductive health programmes at the primary health care level. The Chief of the Reproductive Health Branch closed by saying that it had been the goal of UNFPA to make HIV/AIDS prevention the responsibility of every unit in the Fund, and he hoped that that was reflected in the *AIDS Update*.

308. The Programme Administrator of UNAIDS reported that the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) had requested the regular reporting by UNAIDS to the governing bodies of co-sponsoring organizations and to the Economic and Social Council. The report of the Executive Director of UNAIDS to the PCB was distributed to the Executive Board. She highlighted issues that related to the work of the co-sponsors at the country level. In that regard, the 126 theme groups covering 150 countries were the major coordinating mechanism at the country level. While the World Health Organization served as chair of the majority of the theme groups, the numbers chaired by UNDP and UNFPA had increased. In addition, she noted the contribution of UNDP and UNFPA as country programme advisers in those countries where UNAIDS did not have a representative. Their success depended on the administrative and logistical support accorded to them, as well as access to financial and programmatic tools for resource mobilization and implementation of joint activities. In looking to enhance those aspects of support to the theme groups and to establish guidelines for building on existing tools, UNAIDS looked to UNDP to take the lead, as it had the most experience with inter-agency programming arrangements. At the global level, she noted that preparations for the 1998-1999 coordinated appeal were already under way, with the launch planned for June 1997. The previous appeal had not been very successful, she pointed out, and supplemental funding from the cosponsoring agencies would be required. It was hoped that the co-sponsors would clarify their roles and approaches and mainstream HIV and AIDS activities, to include funding from their core budgets. She noted the increased coordination on specific projects undertaken within UNAIDS. However, many areas still needed improvement. Some problems in that regard pertained to the different practices among the co-sponsors regarding delegation of authority to country-level representatives and the different administrative procedures. The newness of UNAIDS was also a factor, as was the lack of understanding about the how UNAIDS would function at the country level and the role of the co-sponsors in supporting UNAIDS. The PCB had recommended the issuance of guidelines, to be communicated by United Nations organizations, bilateral donors and UNAIDS to country-level staff in order to clarify roles and outputs expected. She underlined that many of the initial problems were linked to the newness of UNAIDS, the lack of financial procedures, differing practices among the co-sponsors, and the lack of agreement on the functioning of UNAIDS at the country level. Guidelines should be communicated by all parties to their country level representatives regarding the clarification of roles and outputs expected. She concluded by noting that the PCB had approved the UNAIDS workplan and budget at $120 million for core activities. The Director of UNAIDS planned to give a briefing at United Nations Headquarters in June.

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309. In the discussion that followed, delegations asked how the founding of UNAIDS had affected the work of UNDP and UNFPA. They also asked what support the co-sponsoring organizations were providing to UNAIDS and whether guidelines on working with UNAIDS had been communicated to the field.

310. The Assistant Administrator acknowledged that more needed to be done with regard to mainstreaming the issue in UNDP programmes. He noted the large workload of resident coordinators, who had also suffered from staff cutbacks in recent years, a factor which could affect the functioning of some of the theme groups. Nevertheless, the formation of so many theme groups was encouraging He emphasized that the resources committed by UNDP at the global level could now be increased, as during the previous cycle, an overall cut of 30 per cent had been imposed, resulting in a constraint on spending. He underlined the commitment of UNDP to the work of UNAIDS, but noted that complications had arisen with regard to defining the role and scope of its activities when the new organization was founded. The roles were now clearer, and over the next few years an improvement in the United Nations response was likely to be seen, in particular regarding the scope of coverage in more than 100 countries.

311. The representative of UNAIDS thanked the Executive Board for its support. In response to a query, she noted that some financial support was needed for the operation of theme groups. There was no established mechanism for resource mobilization, and thus, programmatic tools needed to be developed. Consultations with UNDP on that aspect were expected in the near future.

312. The Chief of the Reproductive Health Branch replied that even though UNAIDS was only a year or so old it was already beginning to affect the Fund's work in a positive way. The HIV/AIDS theme groups that had been set up were turning out to be a very valuable way of enhancing coordination and collaboration and providing a better overall framework for the support UNFPA was providing to national programmes. At the global level, UNAIDS was putting in place a priority plan to collect best practices and lessons learned from all the agencies and organizations working in the field so that these could be fed back into programmes at the country level.

313. UNFPA Representatives were already providing some financial support for the HIV/AIDS theme groups at the country level, and the Fund had agreed to issue further guidelines to the country offices in regard to the budgets that could be utilized for such support.

314. The Vice President underlined the importance of the issue and expressed the hope that resource constraints would not hamper results.

315. The Executive Board took note of the oral reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS.

E. Population trends

316. One delegation introduced an important new chart on estimated population trends, which showed the ranking of the thirty most populous countries in the world and their relative positions at three different times (1950, 1996 and 2050). The delegation asked that the chart be discussed in more detail during

the third regular session 1997. Other delegations felt that the information contained in the chart was highly relevant but that it required further study and consideration by population experts in the capitals before a substantive discussion could take place in the Executive Board.

F. Conclusion of the session

317. The Executive Board concluded its work by adopting the following decision:

97/20. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session 1997

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the annual session 1997 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its annual session 1997 (DP/1997/L.3) as amended;

Approved the reports of the first and second regular sessions 1997 (DP/1997/6; DP/1997/12);

Adopted the draft rules of procedure for the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA (DP/1997/13);

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1997 and 1998 subject to approval of the Committee of Conferences:

Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997
First regular session 1998	19-23 January 1998
Second regular session 1998	20-24 April 1998
Annual session 1998	8-19 June 1998 (Geneva)
Third regular session 1998	14-18 September 1998

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the third regular session 1997 of the Board, as listed in the annex;

UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 2: UNFPA: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1996: PROGRAMME PRIORITIES AND REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Took note of the report of the Executive Director for 1996 on programme priorities, statistical overview and regional overview (DP/FPA/1997/10, Parts I, I/Add.1 and Part II);

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Adopted decision 97/14 of 16 May 1997 on the five-year review of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development;

Requested the Executive Director to revise the conference room paper on the consequences of resource shortfalls on meeting the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (DP/FPA/1997/CRP.1) and to submit the revised report as an official document to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1997;

ITEM 3: UNFPA: EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Took note of the report on UNFPA evaluation activities (DP/FPA/1997/10, Part III);

ITEM 4: UNFPA: WORK PLAN FOR 1998-2001

Adopted decision 97/11 of 14 May 1997 on the UNFPA work plan for 1998-2001 and request for programme expenditure authority;

ITEM 5: UNFPA: PROGRAMMING PROCESS

Adopted decision 97/12 of 16 May 1997 on the UNFPA programming process;

ITEM 6: UNFPA: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Adopted decision 97/13 of 16 May 1997 on the UNFPA information and communication strategy;

UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 7: REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Took note of the reports of the Administrator (DP/1997/15) and the Executive Director (DP/FPA/1997/10, Part V) to the Economic and Social Council and agreed to transmit them to the Economic and Social Council with comments made thereon;

ITEMS 2 AND 8: INTERNAL OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Adopted decision 97/16 of 23 May 1997 on internal audit;

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UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 8: UNDP: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR AND RELATED MATTERS

Adopted decision 97/15 of 23 May 1997 on change management: UNDP 2001;

Took note of the report of the Administrator for 1996 on the introduction to the report, main programme record, assistance to the Palestinian people, statistical annex and reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (DP/1997/16/Addenda 1, 3, 5 and 8), with comments made thereon;

Took note of the report of the Administrator on evaluation (DP/1997/16/Add.4), with comments made thereon;

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa (DP/1997/16/Add.2), with comments made thereon;

Took note of the report of the Administrator on the outcome of the meeting of the High-Level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries and of the decisions adopted at the meeting (DP/1997/L.9).

ITEM 9: UNDP: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

Approved the following country cooperation frameworks:

I

First country cooperation framework for Comoros (DP/CCF/COI/1);

First country cooperation framework for Lesotho (DP/CCF/LES/1);

First country cooperation framework for Sierra Leone (DP/CCF/SIL/1), with comments made thereon;

First country cooperation framework for the United Republic of Tanzania (DP/CCF/URT/1);

First country cooperation framework for Zambia (DP/CCF/ZAM/1);

II

First country cooperation framework for Belarus (DP/CCF/BLR/1), with comments made thereon;

First country cooperation framework for Bosnia and Herzegovina (DP/CCF/BIH/1), with comments made thereon;

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First country cooperation framework for Estonia (DP/CCF/EST/1);

First country cooperation framework for Lithuania (DP/CCF/LIT/1);

III

First country cooperation framework for Lebanon (DP/CCF/LEB/1), with comments made thereon;

First country cooperation framework for Morocco (DP/CCF/MOR/1);

First country cooperation framework for Tunisia (DP/CCF/TUN/1);

IV

First country cooperation framework for the Islamic Republic of Iran (DP/CCF/IRA/1);

ITEM 10. UNDP: COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAMME

Adopted decision 97/17 of 23 May 1997 on the UNDP communication and information policy;

ITEM 11. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN

Adopted decision 97/18 of 23 May 1997 on the United Nations Development Fund for Women;

ITEM 12: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Took note of the information provided on country office staff allocation (DP/1997/CRP.14) with the comments made thereon;

Took note of the report on the accountability system of UNDP (DP/1997/CRP.13);

ITEM 13: UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES

Took note of the report on the United Nations Office for Project Services (DP/1997/19 and DP/1997/19/Add.1/Rev.1);

ITEM 14: OTHER MATTERS

Adopted decision 97/19 on assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

Decided to consider the draft terms of reference of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health as contained in document DP/FPA/1997/CRP.5 at the third regular session 1997 (15-19 September 1997);

Took note of the reports of UNDP and UNFPA on core allocations to 20/20 (DP/1997/CRP.19 and DP/FPA/1997/CRP.3);

Took note of the oral presentation of UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS on UNAIDS programme.

23 May 1997

ANNEX

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNDP/UNFPA TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR 1997

Table 1. First regular session 1997 (13-17 January 1997)
(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.1)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A		Report on the third regular session 1996
	Official	I	1/2 day	Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 1996
	CRP	I		Matters relating to the rules of procedure, documentation and functioning of the Executive Board
	CRP	A		Annual work plan 1997 for UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board
				UNFPA SEGMENT
2				COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1 day	Country programmes
3				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I	1/2 day	Audit reports
4	Official	A	1/2 day	COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING
				UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT
5				HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts
				UNDP SEGMENT
6				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Country cooperation frameworks and global/regional cooperation frameworks

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Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
7				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I	{	Audit reports
	CRP	I	{	Implementation of decision 96/40 on management, accountability and reserve for field accommodation
	CRP	I	1/2 day {	Additional information on cost segments at UNDP headquarters
	Oral	I	{	Report on the accountability system of UNDP
8				UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
	CRP	I	1/2 day	Follow-up to decision 96/43
9				OTHER MATTERS
	CRP	I	1/4 day	Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; and I = information.

Table 2. Second regular session 1997 (10-14 March 1997)

(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.2)	A	(	Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A	(	Report on the first regular session 1997
			(	Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the first regular session 1997
			(	UNDP SEGMENT
2			1½ days (	COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	(	Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
	CRP	A	(	Format and timing for review of the new programming arrangements (96/7)
	Official	I	(	Earmarkings for the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) for 1997-1999
	CRP	I	½ day	National execution
3				UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
	Official	A	½ day	United Nations Capital Development Fund (including strategy and business plans)
4				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	CRP	A	½ day (	Outline of overall strategy for the budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (96/41, para. 4)
	Oral	I	(	Report on the accountability system of UNDP
				UNFPA SEGMENT
6	Official	A	(	COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

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Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
7			2 days	OTHER MATTERS including:
	Oral	I		- Report on Reserve for Field Accommodation
	CRP	I		- Revised report on follow-up to ECOSOC resolution 95/56
	CRP	I		- Response to the recommendations of the external evaluation of UNIFEM
	Official	A		- Proposed revision of UNFPA Financial Regulations
	Oral	I		- Report on the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; and I = information.

Note: Informal consultations on UNDP Change Management held during the session.

Table 3. Annual session 1997 (12-23 May 1997)
(10 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.3)	A	{ {	Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents/work plan
	Official	A	{ {	Report on the first and second regular sessions 1997
	Official	A	{ {	Rules of procedure: report of ad hoc open-ended working group
				UNFPA SEGMENT
2	Official		{ {	REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1996

		I
		I
		I
			1½ days {
			{
			{
				- Programme priorities
				- Statistical overview
				- Regional overview

3	Official	I	½ day	- Evaluation activities
4	Official	A	½ day	WORK PLAN FOR 1998-2001
5	Official	A	1 day	PROGRAMMING PROCESS
6	Official	A	½ day	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
				UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT
7	Official	I	½ day { {	Reports of UNDP and UNFPA to the Economic and Social Council
2 & 8	Official	I	{ {	Reports of UNDP and UNFPA on internal oversight
				UNDP SEGMENT
8				ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
	Official	A	2½ days* {	Introduction by the Administrator
	Official	A	{ {	Main programme record, including reporting on special funds (7 parts)
	Official	I	{ {	United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa
	Official	I	{	Assistance to the Palestinian people
	Official	I		Evaluation
	Official + CRP	A	{	Change management
	Official	I		Report of the Joint Inspection Unit
	Official	I	{	Statistical annex

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* Timing includes one day special event on poverty eradication to be held on Tuesday, 20 May 1997.

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
9				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	½ day	Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
10				COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAMME
	Official	I	½ day	UNDP information and publication policy (96/22)
11				UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
	Official	A	½ day	United Nations Development Fund for Women (95/18)
12			{	FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	CRP	I	1 day {	Report on the accountability system of UNDP
13			{	UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES
	Official	A	{	Report on the United Nations Office for Project Services (96/33)
14			½ day	OTHER MATTERS: UNDP and UNFPA and 2020; oral report on UNAID

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information; and ICPD = International Conference on Population and Development.

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Table 4. Third regular session 1997 (15-19 September 1997)

(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.4)	A	{ {	Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A	½ day {	Report on the annual session 1997
	Official	I	{ {	Decisions adopted at the annual session 1997
	CRP	I	{ {	Outline for Executive Board work plan 1998
				UNDP SEGMENT
2	CRP	I		UNDP CHANGE MANAGEMENT
				Updated implementation plan (97/15)
3				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

	Official	A	{
			{
			{
			{
			{
			1 day {
			{
				Budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999 - 96/41, para. 4 - (including detailed costs of publication and of their distribution - 96/22, criteria for staffing of country offices and implementation of change management - 97/15)

	Official	I	{ {	Annual review of the financial situation 1996
	Official	I	{ {	Subcontracts awarded and major equipment ordered
4	CRP	I	½ day {	RESOURCES AND FUNDING STRATEGY
5				UNOPS: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A	{ {	Budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999
	Official	A	½ day { {	Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997
	Official	I	{	Audit reports
				United Nations Office for Project Services: report of ACABQ on UNOPS

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Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
6				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	½ day	Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
		A		Revised global cooperation framework (97/5)
				UNFPA SEGMENT
7				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A	1½ days	Biennial budget estimates
	Official	A		Annual financial review, 1996
	Official	I		Implementation and monitoring of technical support services arrangements
	Official	I		Evaluation of UNFPA training activities
8	Official	I		**RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**
9	Official	A		COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
				Status of financial implementation of country programmes
10			½ day	OTHER MATTERS
				Terms of reference of the WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information; and UNOPS = United Nations Office for Project Services.

Note: Review of field visits will be taken up in informal consultations during the session.
